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PREFACE.

THESE VOLUMES are the result not of theory, but of experience. If it had been otherwise, they would never have been offered to the world. Education is too important a matter for theory. The risks of mistake are too fatal.

But when the Providence of God has forced upon us the practical consideration of a particular subject, and given us opportunities for testing the principles on which we have acted, it can scarcely be presumptuous to bring the conclusions at which we have arrived—whether through success or failure—into a definite form that may possibly be useful to others.

And there are occasionally periods in life when, after having waited in the earnest hope that some other person would give utterance to opinions and facts generally ignored, though fully known, we are at last urged to speak ourselves, from the sense of a necessity which no longer admits of delay.

Under a feeling of this kind some things contained in the following pages have been written. Whether what has been said is true or false, wise or unwise,

the world must judge: but the one sole desire of the writer has been to base the principles of education upon the teaching of God in Nature and Revelation.

It is this teaching alone which can make any advice authoritative. But we must all gain strength and confidence in the work of education by discovering—if we are able to do so—that the laws for the training and government of children, which we have gathered from general opinion and tradition, or worked out by personal experience and the efforts of our individual intellect, are really no other than those primary laws upon which the One Great Ruler of all has based His own Government, and which are only *not* seen and acknowledged generally, because they work so naturally and uniformly that we submit to without being conscious of them.

BONCHURCH,

May 15, 1865.

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ERRATUM.

Page 2, line 1, *for* man's probation *read* man's present state
of probation.

old way PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE OBJECT OF EDUCATION.

It is written in the Book of Ecclesiastes, "there is no new thing under the sun."¹ That which we call new is but a fresh combination of old materials—a fresh deduction from facts previously known. And if this is true in politics, science, and art, so is it much more true in morals. For morality is a system, not, like the discoveries of science, perfected through the workings of different minds in different ages, but complete in itself from its very commencement. To the commandments of God nothing can be added, and from them nothing can be subtracted. Education, therefore, which, according to the usual acceptation of the word, may be termed the guiding or leading of the young mind in the way which will best enable it to obey the commandments of God, can by no possibility be founded upon any principles in the nineteenth century which were not equally in existence, and equally binding, at the

¹ Eccles. i. 9.

time when, after the Fall, man's probation began. Of every book upon education it may justly be said, "that which is true is not new, and that which is new is not true." And from this consideration it would at first sight follow, as a natural consequence, that to bring before the world any remarks upon a subject acknowledged to be thus exhausted, must be not only useless but wearisome. If we can, only say what others have said before us, why waste our time in the repetition? There is but one answer to this objection. Every age, and every phase of society, has its own characteristics, its own dangers, and its own fallacies, and will therefore necessarily view the subject of education in a manner peculiar to what may be called its own idiosyncrasies.

In the days of chivalry, education was carried on through the medium of the training which pages and squires received in the castles of the feudal barons, and the instruction given to young maidens by the lady who presided over the mysteries of leechcraft, and the intricacies of tapestry-work. A book upon education, written at the time of the Crusades, if such could be found, even though it might embody the soundest principles, would, except by a few thoughtful persons, be regarded merely as a literary curiosity. It would have little or no influence upon the present generation, simply because, however true, it would not meet its necessities. And in a similar though in a less degree, the educational books even of a hundred years ago are likely to be regarded rather as quaint than instructive.

The remarks addressed to our great grandfathers and grandmothers, as they sat in upright chairs,

never resting against the backs, seem misapplied to us, as we lounge upon sofas, or luxuriate in every imaginable form of easy position. The cautions needful in days when drinking was a fashionable vice, and coarseness of thought and action was openly tolerated, are inapplicable to a state of society in which self-restraint is demanded by the laws of society, and language, however insidious and suggestive, must, as a first requirement, be polished.

The age of railroads and electric telegraphs has needs as it has duties of its own; and before any ideas upon education can affect the generation of the day, they must be clothed in the words to which it is accustomed to hearken, and illustrated by the allusions with which it is familiar.

But whilst this reason for the repetition of old truths under new forms certainly exists, the fundamental fact that the object of education has in all ages been recognized to be the same, remains unaltered; and it is consequently evident, that before any advantage can be derived from an inquiry into the principles on which education is to be conducted, it must be thoroughly understood what the object is at which it aims. Theories and systems may be clever, ingenious, and plausible; they may even produce a result highly satisfactory in a certain sense; but, if those results are not such as were sought for, the theories and systems must be confessed to be failures.

To educate rightly is, as it has been said, to guide and lead the young mind in the way which will best enable it to obey the commandments of God. This will probably be acknowledged by all serious

and thoughtful persons as an explanation fundamentally correct, although there may be differences of opinion as to the mode of its expression.

Will it be considered a startling assertion to add, that this is in reality only a secondary object?—that there is another for which we must and do work every hour, every moment, in the secrecy of our hearts, in the depths of our privacy, amid the turmoil of business and the distractions of pleasure, in the haunts of vice and in the sanctuary of God?—an object which on this side the grave we can never know; which, if we did know, we could never hope to understand; but which is true, enduring, unalterable, as the Eternal Counsels of the Almighty, since it belongs to an Omniscience which has foreseen the end of every human being from the beginning; and according to that foreknowledge, though not apart from human will, has prepared the sphere in which throughout Eternity he shall fulfil the purpose for which not earth only, but the universe—not man alone, but the angels, were created.

Bishop Butler remarks that, in considering the constitution of this present world, “we must acknowledge that as there is not any action or natural event, which we are acquainted with, so single and unconnected as not to have a respect to some other actions and events; so, possibly, each of them, when it has not an immediate, may yet have a remote natural relation to other actions and events, much beyond the compass of this present world.”¹ And he adds, that further thought will “lead us to consider this little

¹ Analogy, Part I., chap. vii.

scene of human life, in which we are so busily engaged, as having a reference, of some sort or other, to a much larger plan of things. Whether we are any way related to the more distant parts of the boundless universe into which we are brought, is altogether uncertain; but it is evident that the course of things which comes within our view is connected with somewhat past, present, and future, beyond it. So that we are placed, as one may speak, in the middle of a scheme, not a fixed, but a progressive one; every way incomprehensible; incomprehensible, in a manner, equally with respect to what has been, to what now is, and what shall be hereafter.”¹

Being thus incomprehensible, we might suppose that a conviction, however strong, of the existence of such a scheme would exercise but little influence on our actions at present. We may possibly, probably, even certainly, be working for the completion of some mighty purpose of the Most High; but if we know not what it is, it must be to us as if it were not. Such would be the first hurried reasoning of our minds. Yet more careful consideration will, in all likelihood, bring us to a different conclusion. The conviction that every individual redeemed through the Blood of Christ has a place marked out for him, duties to be performed, trusts to be fulfilled, purposes for which he is to work in the life on which he will enter at the Resurrection, though it may not directly influence our conduct with regard to our earthly life, must and ought to do so as regards our preparation for Heaven. And

¹ Analogy, Part I., conclusion.

looking upon education as but another term for such preparation, one effect which it will probably have will be that of destroying our confidence in systems, as distinguished from principles.

The present age is one which may peculiarly be called the age of systems. Everything undertaken, more especially if it refers to the training of the young, is to be carried on upon some definite plan. This is a fact so commonly recognized that one of the formulas of inquiry used, when persons are anxious to gain information from those who undertake to educate, is what system they pursue? It is the vaguest of all vague questions. It may mean—Do you give your lessons in French or English? Is your aim classical or scientific? Have you paid teachers, or do you instruct yourself? Or, it may also mean—Do you trust to discipline as your motive power, or do you depend wholly upon love? Do you carry out strictly the doctrines and rules of the Church; or, on the other hand, do you profess to be a so-called Liberal, recognizing all creeds and all sects without distinction? And as the question is vague, so, necessarily, the answers given will be vague; but the very fact that the inquiry is thought necessary proves that the existence of systems is recognized as a fundamental basis of education.

And why should it not be?

The answer will best be given by examining into the aim and the advantages of system. A system is a mode of action by which it is supposed we shall be able to attain, in the most direct manner and the most perfect degree, some specified object. If a young man intends to enter the army, he is sent to

a military college; there he is instructed in certain branches of knowledge, and drilled according to certain rules. Whether he is vicious or virtuous, clever or dull, a fixed system is provided, and upon that he is trained. The one object is to make him a good soldier; and if a hundred young men present themselves, in the course of the year, as destined for the army, the same rules, with regard to military duties, will be applied to all alike. The aim is clear, the system has been well considered, and the result is, therefore, upon the whole, satisfactory.

So it is with all other professions—with all trades and occupations. Give a definite object, and a system is not only desirable, but necessary; perfection cannot be attained without it.

But if, as it has been suggested with regard to the training of the young, we know nothing of our ultimate object; if the purpose for which we are to labour is hidden; if the results to be finally produced are utterly beyond our comprehension,—then are systems not aids, but stumbling-blocks; not good, but infinitely mischievous.

This may be seen more clearly if we consider that in the idea of a definite and peculiar moral system of education there is always involved the exaltation of some one guiding principle above, if not apart from, others.

As, with the heathen Stoic, indifference to worldly enjoyments was recognized as the one chief element of goodness, and with the Christian Jesuit obedience is considered the virtue to which all others must bow; so, in the present day, we sometimes hear of love, or reverence, or honour, or the sense of duty,

without reference to rewards, spoken of as the main-springs by which the whole machinery of education is to be worked. And being, as they are, principles excellent in themselves, we may perhaps have wondered why it is that in almost all cases the peculiar systems based upon them are found in the end to fail.

May it not be for this reason? A system, whatever it may be, must, so far as it is a system, act without regard to the varieties of character; it must aim at producing the same tone of mind in every individual subjected to its influence; and the first elementary truth in education—because lying at the foundation, as it would appear, of all God's dealings with man, and all His purposes for him—is that we are neither required, nor intended, to have the same tone of mind. Harmony, not melody, is the object of creation; and if we strive for melody, we shall but end in producing discord.

But it may, perhaps, be said, the command given us is, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."¹ If, therefore, the perfection of God consists, as we know it does, in the equal balance of all His attributes, is it not each man's duty to strive, so far as he may, to attain a similar balance in his own character?

Unquestionably; and yet it is most probably true that the actual attainment of such an equal balance by every human being would be inconsistent with the mysterious purposes of God in creation.

For we must remember that there are two kinds of

¹ St. Matt. v. 48.

perfection—perfection in degree, and perfection in kind. God alone is perfect in degree; His creatures are only perfect in kind. All goodness, all power, all beauty, are included in the idea of the one great Maker and Father of all. To His children He gives certain portions of this perfection, so that they may exhibit different phases of it; and this distinguishing gift—whether energy, or love, or generosity, or the spirit of self-sacrifice, or whatever it may be—is essential, as marking the kind of perfection for which the individual is destined. But as, in consequence of human imperfection, every strong natural inclination has a tendency to exaggeration, and consequently to sin, therefore this peculiar characteristic requires to be balanced by others, to be checked and trained—not in order to annihilate it, for that would be attempting to thwart the will of God in its creation—but that it may be kept in such just proportion as to fit it for the work to which it is destined. We see the use of such strong tendencies, and yet the necessity of keeping them in due proportion to the rest of the character, in the working of human affairs. A man is, we will suppose, gifted with certain qualities which enable him to plan and carry out a wise and benevolent work. Without these he could not have succeeded; and yet these very same qualities, if not controlled and balanced, will in the end outgrow their usefulness, and ultimately mar the very object which at first they helped to attain. To aim at a perfectly equal balance of character is therefore absolutely necessary, whilst, at the same time, to attain it is impossible. There is a book from which we draw our wisest maxims of morality, and which we profess to make

our chief guide in education, that might—"if we would give ourselves the trouble to examine it—lead us to some very manifest conclusions upon the subject. The Bible has many offices to perform; none, perhaps, may be more important, in a secondary degree, than that of setting before us the mode in which the All-Wise God has seen fit to train individual characters. And when we look into it with this idea in our minds, one fact strikes us at the outset—that whatever such training may have been, it did in no way tend to destroy the marked distinction in intellect, temper, affection, between man and man. Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John, how separately, how vividly, they stand forth before us! How evident is the action and reaction of their natural dispositions, and the circumstances in which they were placed! How entirely are they the same persons—exhibiting the same special characteristics throughout the whole course of their lives!

This will be seen more plainly if we examine one or two instances more minutely. Joseph, Moses, and St. Paul were persons who filled most prominent parts in the history of God's dealings with man. They were trained, if the expression may with reverence be permitted, under the especial Eye of God, with a view to their filling very important offices on earth. Let us consider how far such training affected their distinct individuality.

CHAPTER II.

SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS.

THE character of Joseph is one felt more easily than it can be described ; but that human affection, both quick and deep, was its distinguishing trait will scarcely be disputed. Sensitive, clinging, sympathizing, open-hearted, we follow the course of his eventful life with a continually recurring pang that one apparently so little fitted to endure sorrow should have been compelled so largely to partake of it.

The marked characteristics of his disposition exhibit themselves from the very commencement of his history. He was the child of Jacob's old age, and his confiding gentleness was doubtless fostered by the tenderness lavished upon him by his father—both for his own sake and for the memory of his mother. When he dreamed a wonderful dream, and his childish imagination was excited by it, the brothers who hated him were the persons to whom he turned for sympathy ; when sent on his solitary journey to seek for tidings of them, no feeling of dread seems to have entered his heart ; and when they carried out their cruel plans, and sold him to the Ishmaelites, there was no upbraiding : only in the anguish of his soul he besought them, and they would not hear.

He was brought down into Egypt—a captive—the victim of a wrong which might well have turned every gentle feeling into rankling bitterness; but adversity had no such power over him. Destined to be the ruler of a great nation, his warm affections were yet in no way to be uprooted: they needed only to be governed; and when the temptation which presented itself was resisted, the strength which his principles had by that resistance acquired was a safeguard for his future life.

There is no need to continue the story in detail. Even if we have read it at no other time, we have probably, year by year, as the appointed Sunday lesson occurred, looked for it as for the “very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice.”¹ We have watched the rise of Joseph from a prison to a palace, the successive interviews with his brethren, the yearning of his heart towards them, the anxious thought for his father, and the burst of overpowering feeling, which “the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard,” when at length the long hidden secret was revealed. It is all known to us, all familiar, though sacred as the prayers of our infancy. But in its sacredness we may not forget its human truthfulness. Joseph was a man “subject to like passions as ourselves”; and the character impressed upon him at his birth remained with him, and can be traced till his death. If we would know whether years and prosperity could chill the warmth of his affections, we may think upon the grief evinced for his father’s death, the mourning “with a great and very sore lamentation,”² commemorated even by the

¹ Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

² Gen. l. 10.

people of the land; and the tenderness which expended itself doubtless upon Ephraim's children of the third generation, as well as upon the children of "Machir the son of Manasseh," who "were brought up upon Joseph's knees."¹

Such was the individuality of Joseph, perhaps the most interesting of all the characters in the Old Testament. That he was a wise ruler, just and true, serving his earthly sovereign as he served his God, and that the events of his early life fitted him for the office he was to fulfil, are facts equally important and instructive. But the point which we are now called upon to remark is, that in training him, as no doubt God in His wisdom did train him, to be the ruler of Egypt, his distinctive qualities were left untouched, or, at least, were only guided and cultivated. There were features of his character which, when developed by circumstances, fitted him for the post he was to occupy in Egypt; but there were also other and more striking characteristics, educated by an inner discipline, which, unless we conceive them to have had no object—an idea inconsistent with the infinite wisdom of the Creator—must have been given him with a view to some duty or office connected with a higher and more enduring existence.

As Joseph lived, so he died, and so he will rise again. Can it be that his love, his tenderness, his sympathy, shall be without purpose in Eternity?

Moses comes before us with a very different claim upon our interest. We are told, in the Book of Numbers, that he was the "meekest of men"; but probably the comment which we all make upon the

¹ Gen. i. 23.

words is that of wonder. We think of Moses striking the rock in his impatience, and it would seem that he was not meek.

Yet we must remember that meekness does not necessarily imply insensibility or slowness of feeling, but only strict self-control, united with unselfishness and sympathy. The most excitable person may, with such counteracting qualities, become the meekest; self-control keeping the eager impulse under subjection, until unselfishness and sympathy have had time to make themselves heard, and by placing the irritating circumstances in a just light, to remove or soften the cause of offence.

Self-control is, however, a hard lesson; and until it is thoroughly acquired, a person born with an impetuous temperament will be liable to sudden outbreaks of wrath. Moses at the beginning of his career, and at its conclusion, appears, in this respect, like two distinct persons; and yet examination seems to show that he never lost his natural excitability. For it must be remembered that God has not implanted in our nature any passion which, necessarily and irresistibly, leads us to sin. Unjustifiable anger is doubtless a great offence, but the quick feelings and the energy of disposition which, when distorted and exaggerated, constitute sinful anger, are in themselves innocent, and may even be productive of great good. Moses, impetuous by nature, became "the meekest of men," that is, he learnt to control his instinctive feelings, so as not to indulge them on wrong occasions, or in a wrong degree; but the characteristics still remained. They had a work to do on earth, and have doubtless a work to do also

in the unseen world; and whatever may be the mysterious connection between the glorified body and the renewed soul, and whatever the effect of matter upon mind, we may not think that when we meet the great Hebrew Lawgiver, before the judgment seat of our Redeemer, it will be in any form, or with any qualities, but those which shall enable us at once to recognize him in his distinct individuality.

We will cursorily glance at his history as an evidence of what has been asserted.

On the very first occasion when Moses is brought before us in Scripture, his impetuosity, quick sympathy, and unselfishness, though mingled with singular timidity, are exhibited. He spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, and he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. The following day he interfered in a quarrel between two of his own countrymen, and then in alarm fled from Egypt. In Midian he again appeared in a similar character, as the champion of the daughters of Reuel, in their contest with the shepherds.

During the whole period of the wonderful intercourse between the Almighty and the chosen deliverer of Israel, the impetuosity of Moses' character was displayed continually. When the miracles, which he was enabled to work, failed of their effects upon the king's heart, he ventured to expostulate with God, in words which could only have been suggested by the disappointment of an impatient spirit. The overtaking of his own powers, when, at the very outset of the journey through the wilderness, he undertook himself to decide the

quarrels which arose amongst the people, is an evidence that his was no naturally calm and prudent mind. The appeal made by his father-in-law, "Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee,"¹ shows the consciousness entertained by those who watched him, of the eagerness, which would almost necessarily tend to exaggeration in action; whilst the ready compliance with Jethro's suggestion is a proof of the control which he was learning to exercise over his own impulses.

The circumstances which followed the giving of the law are another and very striking testimony to the impetuosity of Moses' character. When he descended the Mount, and heard the voices of the people shouting in their idolatrous worship, his "anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables (of the law) out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount."² It was a just anger—more than just—it was holy; but it was anger still, and the punishment inflicted upon the people is in accordance with it. Moses burnt the calf in the fire, and "ground it to powder, and straved it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." And when he had thus humbled them to the dust, he gave the fierce command to the sons of Levi, "Go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp; and slay every man his companion, and every man his neighbour."³

The prayer which followed that terrible vengeance is surely also the prayer of no calm mind. "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them

¹ Exod. xviii. 18. ² Exod. xxxii. 19. ³ Exod. xxxii. 20, 27.

gods of gold. Y^e Jew^s; if Thou wilt forgive their sin,—and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.”¹ Neither was it a quiet unimpassioned spirit which could have dared to utter that awful request—“I beseech thee, shew me Thy Glory”²—immediately after the exhibition of the Almighty’s vengeance. That such a request was, in its measure, granted, is a sufficient proof, if any were needed, that ardent feelings, however enthusiastic, are, when duly controlled, acceptable in God’s sight, if only they are directed into their legitimate channel.

In singular contrast with the great jealousy exhibited by Moses for the honour of the Almighty—a jealousy which was again showed in the case of the rebellion of Korah—is the fact that in the one instance in which his private actions were condemned, his conduct was such as to cause the comment to be inserted which has given rise in many minds to so much astonishment—“Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.”³

Yes, Moses was meek. He had controlled and subdued himself to meekness where his own honour was at stake; but when the glory of his God was concerned he was still what he was at his birth—zealous, ardent, even hasty, in his impulses and his actions; and God, as it would seem, did not will that he should be otherwise.

And yet, for an angry word and a hasty action,

¹ Exod. xxxii. 31, 32. ² Exod. xxxiii. 18. ³ Numb. xii. 3.

Moses was denied the one thing of his life—he was forbidden to enter the Promised Land.

There must have been some overpowering cause for a discipline so severe, and so rigidly carried out. It may be that when men have all but attained the self-restraint which converts their natural characteristics into settled virtue, God is pleased to test and purify them more thoroughly in order that every remaining particle of dross may be purged away, and they may be fully fitted for their work in another state. From the day when the decree was given—"Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them"¹—the life of the eager-hearted leader of Israel must have been one long struggle between the impatient yearnings of his natural disposition and the submission demanded by God.

We see it throughout the whole of the Book of Deuteronomy. It is a book containing no mere repetition of laws: it is the outpouring of the strongest patriotism, of the most ardent longing for a people's welfare; but it is also the revelation of a secret bitterness of regret in the heart of Moses, which betrays itself in the constantly recurring reference to the punishment that had fallen upon him. "The Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou shalt not go in thither."² "And I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, . . . I pray Thee, let me go over, and see the good

¹ Numb. xx. 12.

² Deut. i. 37.

land that is beyond Jordan^{SW}, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon." ¹ "But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land." ² He was not to enter. He was but to gaze from afar on a picture the foreground of which alone was clearly discernible. The deep valley of the Jordan intervened between him and "that good land." From the heights of Pisgah he could catch but a glimpse of Gilead and the distant hills of Naphtali; and though Jerusalem, the destined centre of his nation's glory, may have been visible through the opening of the descent to Jericho, yet the limits of the country of his hope—"the utmost sea and the desert of the south"—were hidden from him.

And yet so much had he dwelt upon it in imagination, that he speaks of it in the language of one to whom every feature of the landscape and every production of the soil were familiar. "The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a land of brooks and waters that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." ³ And even when directing them as to the solemn ceremonies by which their entrance into their inheritance was to be marked, he turns aside, as it were, to mark the distinctive outline of the scenery to be connected with it. Ebal and Gerizim—the mountains of blessing and of cursing—were fixed

¹ Deut. iii. 23, 25.

² Deut. iv. 22.

³ Deut. viii. 7-9.

for ever in the knowledge^{amongst} the people by the description given, lingeringly and tenderly, as though they belonged rather to a home of promise than of memory. "Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh?"¹

To see the land of this vivid faith, to approach so near, even to its border, and yet to be debarred from entering, was a punishment the severity of which can never be appreciated till we realize the distinctive characteristics of the man on whom it was inflicted. Yet, after the long tempestuous life, and the one bitter disappointment, the last blessing of Moses shows a fulness of confidence and rest which brings with it the conviction that the imperfection of human impetuosity had at length been subdued into an exulting trust; and that the meekest, yet, perhaps, the most eager-hearted of men, was ready for his work in a future and a sinless world. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky. The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting Arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy

¹ Dent. xi. 30.

help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."¹

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."²

One more illustration of the marked differences between the best of men may be taken from the characters belonging to the Christian dispensation. Moses and St. Paul were both impulsive, earnest, energetic; both laboured devotedly for the service of their Almighty Lord; both were permitted to contribute largely to the establishment of His Kingdom upon earth. Yet we feel that they were essentially unlike. In what did this dissimilarity consist?

Perhaps the first and most obvious distinction may be found in a characteristic in St. Paul, which we are often inclined utterly to condemn, so rarely is it controlled sufficiently to work for good. For want of a better term, it may be called self-reliance. Now, it is evident that this quality may lead a man to presumption: it may induce him to lean on his own understanding, rejecting the counsels of God. But it is also certain, though perhaps not at once equally evident, that without it no great work of good can in this world be carried out; unless, as in the case of Moses, it may please God visibly to interpose His own power, and exhibit it the more

¹ Deut. xxxiii. 26—29.

² Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6.

through the very weakness of the instrument He vouchsafes to employ.

If St. Paul had not been an Apostle, he must still have been a distinguished man. He had opinions, purposes, determinations of his own; he was by nature bold. Comparing him with Moses, and imagining him placed in the same position, we feel that his character must have exhibited itself differently. The commands of God would have been equally obeyed by both; but where Moses shrank back with timid reluctance, St. Paul would, as we cannot but imagine, have thrown the energy of his will into the work, and confronted its difficulties with exultation. In Moses, impetuosity was the excitement of a moment; in St. Paul it was the burning ardour of a life. Throughout the whole career of the great Hebrew Lawgiver, we are continually carried back to the Almighty as the immediate Director of his determinations. So strongly, indeed, is this displayed that, without the fact of this guidance, it would seem impossible for Moses, being what he was, to have done what he did. He might have felt for his countrymen, he might have committed some hasty act in their defence; but by nature he was, as it appears, timid in working out his wishes, however strong might be the impulse which awakened them. Even if he had been capable of forming laws for the Israelites, he was clearly not capable of an act so bold as that of carrying them out of Egypt; still less of leading them through the wilderness, and bearing with their murmurs and their rebellions for forty years.

St. Paul might have done it; for St. Paul, as a

man, feared no difficulties, and had a steadiness of aim which nothing could alter. And if St. Paul had been left in the darkness of Judaism, he might have been Antichrist in the independence of his dauntless spirit, and the strength of his wonderful intellect. Is it in the least necessary that such independence and strength should be crushed, before the sinful human creature is admitted into the presence of his Maker? A cursory glance at St. Paul's life would seem to teach us otherwise.

The outset of his history shows the power of independent thought and action, excited in a wrong cause. It was this which made him turn aside from the gentler counsels of Gamaliel, and take part in the condemnation of Stephen; and the same characteristic, when sanctified by the Spirit of God, led him afterwards openly to give up the prejudices of his birth and education, fearlessly to proclaim salvation to the Gentiles, and without regard to the consequences to carry on the controversies which that act necessarily involved. And it is very remarkable that the interposition of the Almighty appears in scarcely any instance exerted, to check this independence of character. Whilst, in the case of Moses, even the minutest details of law and conduct were regulated by special command, in that of St. Paul a freedom of conduct was permitted which the Apostle himself plainly recognizes. We see it in his missionary journeys, begun, indeed, by express command, but carried out in conformity with human plans, and only in one instance interrupted by the command not to preach in Bithynia, but to go at once to Europe. The circumcision of Timothy, and the

omission of the same rite in the case of Titus, were the decisions, as it would evidently seem, of human judgment. The opinions respecting the advisability of marriage under certain circumstances, sent to the Corinthian Church, were expressly stated to be, in some points, the result of his own consideration of the subject; whilst in explaining his conduct, or in excusing himself when blamed, St. Paul constantly brings forward reasons which would have been worse than needless if an express command had been issued in each separate case. Thus, he says, speaking of his change of mind with reference to his intended visit to Corinth, "When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth."¹ And so in another place, "I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness."² And once more, "Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? In all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself."³

In these and in many other instances, we see plainly that the Apostle, converted by a miracle, and divinely inspired, was yet permitted, within certain limits, to carry out the counsels of God in the mode which seemed to his own judgment the best and wisest; though we must not forget that whilst asserting this in the plainest way, he adds, "I think also that I have the Spirit of God."⁴

¹ 2 Cor. i. 17, 23.

² 2 Cor. ii. 1.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 7, 9.

⁴ 1 Cor. vii. 40.

At what point the Divine guidance and the peculiarities of the human mind met, it is as impossible for us to decide, as it is to discover which of our thoughts are given us by the direct interposition of the Holy Spirit, and which are the result of what may be termed natural causes. The only fact of importance to the present subject is, that the independent working of St. Paul's vigorous character was in no way crushed by the obedience required by his Christian profession, or by the fact of his Divine inspiration. And as scope was given to this vigour in action, so was it also permitted in thought. St. Paul's intellect, his originality, and, if the expression may, without irreverence, be used, his worldly wisdom, are exhibited in his public addresses as well as in his written Epistles. Looking at his speeches, made under different circumstances, we are at once struck by their variety, their definite aim, and the boldness with which every point that can be turned to advantage is seized upon. In his speech to the Athenians, perhaps the most remarkable of all, the line of his argument is Christian only in a very remote degree. Addressing a heathen people, he reasons upon the principles of natural religion, and from them leads the way gradually to revelation. When addressing his own countrymen, he gives the story of his conversion at length, and enlists their attention, at the very opening of his speech, by declaring his adherence to the strictest principles of their law. But when he speaks to Felix, the profligate heathen, he passes over the miraculous portion of his story; and in his defence lays the chief stress upon his love of law, peace, and order; at the same

time strongly asserting his own innocence—a form of self-respect according well with the Roman sense of dignity. In the presence of Agrippa, again, he becomes a different person. He sinks the public character, and appeals to the king individually. One they were in the foundation of their faith, one in their reverence for the prophets, and their expectation of a Messiah. Why should they not be one in the hope of resurrection and salvation? Neither did the Apostle neglect to seize any point which might fairly be turned to his own advantage. Before the Roman officer he claimed the privileges of a Roman citizen, and thus secured himself from the degradation of scourging. When Pharisees and Sadducees were mingled in one council he declared himself “a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee,”¹ and immediately divided the assembly. When threatened by the Jews, he, without hesitation, appealed to the Roman emperor. In all this there was the working of a mind which had a power of rapid judgment and quick decision that must, under any circumstances, have been remarkable, but which is singularly striking when we see it exhibited in one whose miraculous conversion, and whose dedication to a special office as an inspired teacher, would, it might have been supposed, subdue, if not utterly crush, the action of the merely natural reason.

There is no need to carry out these illustrations any further. What has been said may indeed to many appear to be merely a repetition of self-evident facts; and yet, how far do we find these facts acted

¹ Acts xxiii. 6.

upon? How many thoughtful parents have loved an ideal child, and formed for it, even before its birth, an ideal system of education! How many, instead of accepting their children as they have been given them, with all their distinctive traits, have, by the power of imagination, invested them with qualities which they did not possess, but which it was considered right that they should possess; and acting upon that preconceived determination, forced them into professions or positions in life for which they were unsuited, and thus fatally marred their prospects! It is the case with almost all, more or less. We make ourselves our children's Providence, and then marvel that we fail to attain the object for which we have laboured. Regardless of the characteristics which God has implanted in them, and which must be intended for the accomplishment of His purpose, we bend and coerce in order to form the character and the life according to our own ideas of what is best, and then sit down in disappointment, and lay the blame on the child, if we dare not attribute it to our Maker.

And yet it will be said all education must be unsound which does not propose for itself some object; and the highest of all objects must be that of living a life in accordance with God's Will. If, therefore, we strive to educate our children in conformity with God's Will we must be doing right. Most perfectly true: but the mistake we make is in confounding God's Will with God's command. His Will, with regard to each individual, is the object or purpose—the final cause, of that individual's creation. His commands are the laws

by which He teaches us how this object may best be attained. The knowledge of God's commands does not, therefore, as we are apt to think, give us a knowledge of His Will with regard either to ourselves or to others; if it did, we should be obliged continually to go counter to the Providential circumstances of life in order to place our children in the position in which we should have reason to think they would be least exposed to the temptation to disobey those commands. A boy with an ardent desire for the life of a soldier could never, for instance, by Christian parents, be allowed to become a soldier, because it is universally acknowledged that the military profession is open to the risk of great evil; and the very fact of the longing for such a life would imply that the boy had sympathies and tendencies that would peculiarly expose him to this evil. Heavy as is the responsibility of a parent now, it would in that case be increased tenfold; for all future contingencies, as well as all present claims, would have to be weighed, before we could venture to take a single step towards setting forth our children in life, with the expectation of a blessing to accompany them.

God does indeed give us commands. We know them, and must work according to them. But He does not reveal to us His Will—meaning by His Will His purposes and intentions; we may not, therefore, search irreverently into what that Will may be; but we must watch the distinctive characteristics of our children, and the circumstances in which He has placed them, and applying to them the commands as best we may, we must leave the result in God's

Hands; being quite sure that whether failure or success may attend our earthly projects, there can be but one end, and that God's end, brought out in the future.

And if we would be assured that this acceptance of individual characteristics is our only safe guide in education, we may consider briefly the effect of the contrary—the systematic principle.

A child, we will suppose, is eager, affectionate, yet hasty in judgment, and passionate in temper. Our system, perhaps, is sternness and justice. We think it right to repel feeling; and we can and do repel it—externally. But the impetuosity and temper break forth when the child escapes our control, and the results are a hundred-fold more fatal than they could possibly have been if we had accepted the character as the indication of God's Will for the child's future destiny, and sympathized with, and trained, instead of attempting to repel it.

Again, another child may be reserved, cold in manner, shy, and exclusive. Our system, perhaps, is that of openness and confidence. We insist upon unreserve, we display our own feelings, and expect a similar exhibition in return. In all probability we shall fail in our wish; but if we succeed, we shall have gained only an outward victory: the natural tone of mind will return when the external influence is withdrawn, and by the necessary law of reaction its peculiarities will be exaggerated.

Or, to take one more example, we rely perhaps upon obedience—absolute obedience. If we insist upon it we shall have it, and the result will at first

be eminently gratifying; for without obedience the very idea of education is an absurdity. But if we train the child upon obedience only, without reference to other principles, it will become, if weak, an automaton; if strong, a hypocrite. Either the will, from force of habit, will succumb through life to every more powerful will with which it comes in contact; or, equally from force of habit, the natural disposition will be concealed, and the character will be made to appear that which may for the moment be most to the advantage of the individual.

A system, indeed, even supposing it to be good for one, cannot possibly be good for all: there are no doubt faults which must in each be alike uprooted, yet even with regard to them the mode of dealing must in every case be a subject of separate study.

But the characteristics of which we have been speaking are by no means necessarily faults, though they are very likely to become such. If they are to be ignored or crushed by system, then is man's wisdom very different from God's. Where shall we find the rigidity of system in the government of the Almighty?

Ten laws contain the commands of God for the conduct of the whole human race, though they are to be amplified and applied to every condition and circumstance according to man's reason and judgment. And these have been condensed by our Redeemer into two, which, whosoever should be enabled to keep in all their fulness, would be exalted to the purity of an angel: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself." ¹

We want no other principles. These, and these only, are the perfect revelation of God, and whatever laws may be deduced from them are but phases and portions of the great whole. As the several rays of colour merge in the pure light ; as the various attributes of the All-Holy One blend into one infinite perfection ; so the various forms of our duty to God are contained in the first of these commands, and those connected with our duty to man in the second. And when we base education upon any one phase of good instead of that which embraces all goodness, we act as did the heathen when they deified the attributes of the Almighty, and, placing them on His Throne, fell down and worshipped each man the god of his own choice—the principle which was most akin to the desire of his own heart.

The effect of that idolatry upon the morals of mankind—the inextricable confusion which it occasioned—is too well known to be enlarged upon. But we may be certain that a false principle will work a fatal result as surely now as it did then.

¹ St. Luke x. 27.

CHAPTER III.

PRINCIPLES AND RULES.

WE have arrived at this conclusion—that the object of education is the carrying out of God's Will for the individual; that the purpose of this Will is hidden from us in the Eternal counsels of God; but that the direction in which we are to work is pointed out to us by the peculiar endowments of character and of intellect with which every person is gifted; whilst the principles which are to guide us are contained in the two great commands—to love God wholly, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

We now come to the more difficult and intricate questions which concern the application of these laws to particular cases.

When we look at the various conditions of man's life on earth, it is evident that this application of the two fundamental laws must involve secondary laws, such as those contained in the Decalogue, whilst these again must be subdivided to meet the needs of civil, ecclesiastical, and domestic government. It is of the latter only—that is, of the laws required for domestic government—that we have now to speak.

Were we angels, we should need none but funda-

mental law—for angels, as Hooker says, “beholding the Face of God, in admiration of so great excellency, they all adore Him; and being rapt with the love of His Beauty, they cleave inseparably for ever unto Him. Desire to resemble Him in goodness maketh them unweariable, and even insatiable in their longing to do by all means all manner of good unto all the creatures of God, but especially unto the children of men.”¹ And the nearer a man approaches to the life of an angel upon earth, the less he will find himself oppressed by the restraints of moral secondary laws. They are but exemplifications of the two great primary laws, and as such he can not only reconcile himself to them without difficulty, but even cease to feel that they are laws, so far as the notion of law implies restraint.

To attempt, however, to go through life without secondary laws of some kind, marked and well considered, would be to act against the dictates of reason, and also to set aside the example which God Himself has given us in His own dealings with His creatures. For the example of these secondary laws and the principle of their right application is to be found in the mode in which God has, at two different periods of the world's history, been pleased to teach the people whom He has set apart for Himself, under the Jewish and under the Christian dispensations.

When the Jews were led out of Egypt, they were a nation in infancy. Long subjection had crushed all strength of mind, all settled force of purpose, all power of abstraction. Like children, they could be

¹ Eccles. Pol., Book I.

ruled only by the visible. Earthly objects, earthly gratifications, were their sole ideas of reward. Impatient of disappointment—led away by the temptations of sense—it required the actual symbols of God's presence to keep Him in their remembrance. When Moses remained in the Mount they called upon Aaron to make them a god, for unless they saw their deity they could not believe in him. When water failed them, they murmured; when food became scarce, they forgot the miseries of slavery, and groaned for the flesh-pots of Egypt. Miracles made only a momentary impression upon them, for, like children, so limited were their powers of thought and reasoning, that miracles themselves became natural to them.

To give none but abstract laws to such a people would have been absolutely unavailing; as unavailing as it would be to preach to a little child of that eternal Law, the origin of all law, "which hath been of God, and with God everlastingly—that Law, the Author and Observer whereof is one only God, to be blessed for ever."¹

For a nation in its infancy, therefore, not only general secondary laws, but temporary laws, or rules of various descriptions, were essential. They required limitations, warnings, minute directions, instantaneous punishments; for by these only could their earthly and narrow minds be kept in the right path. If left to themselves, they must have been the prey of their own passions, and succumbed to their own weakness. And we find that in training them God

¹ Eccles. Pol., Book I.

did thus deal with them. He marked out distinctly the path in which they were to tread. He gave them directions for their daily use. He interposed with cautions at every step. He made their religion one of outward observances, which, even if they failed to recognize as having a spiritual meaning, yet stamped upon their hearts indelibly the consciousness of an unseen God whom they were to obey; and every infraction of those rules was punished without delay. And so He led them on, step by step, until they were established in their own land; and then, by slow degrees, He relaxed this visible interposition, and though he still made His rules binding upon them, He taught them the bitter consequences of disobedience rather by the experience of natural punishments, than by the immediate infliction of His judgments.

The history of the Jews under the Judges is the history of a nation whose physical powers are developing, whilst the moral and intellectual powers are, as it were, in abeyance. The constant strife, the rough hardihood, the summary vengeance of which we read, all speak of such a period. God from time to time interposed for their deliverance, but it would seem as if He had willed that they should work out for themselves those laws of civil government without which a people can be but barbarians. Like children at school, they had their contests for might over right, and were compelled to recognize the necessity of government by the sufferings which its absence brought upon them. Under the Kings their intellectual powers were enlarged, civilization spread; wealth, and luxury, and earthly splendour

formed part of the national greatness. But moral advancement was left far in the background." That was a time for solemn rebukes and prophetic threatenings; but there were no new laws, and actual miraculous interpositions were rare, and given rather as warnings to those who had forsaken God, than as encouragements to those who served Him. Elijah and Elisha were prophets in Israel; for Judah—more faithful—needed not such visible reminders of the Almighty's power.

But the Jews, as a nation, failed to respond to the care lavished upon them. They did the work predestined for them in the counsels of God, but their will was not one with His, and they were cast off. And then began a new dispensation—one which was to embrace the whole human race.

It was a dispensation commenced under different circumstances, at a more advanced period of the world's growth. Learning, art, and civilization had arrived at a point which, even in these days of professed advancement, can scarcely be said to be surpassed. The writers of that period are still our teachers; the works of its sculptors and architects are still our models. Mankind were adults, and the education of childhood was unsuited to them.

And therefore when God vouchsafed once more to reveal His commands, it was in a different way. The laws promulgated by our Blessed Lord took the form of principles. The rules for their application it was left to the Christian Church to work out for itself, though directly guided at first, as we cannot doubt, by the Spirit of God.

The truth of this statement has already been

illustrated by the life of St. Paul; but it is evidenced throughout the whole of the New Testament, and is confirmed by the history of mankind from that period to the present day. We, in our ignorance and blindness, doubtless are often inclined to wish it had been otherwise. In the midst of the controversies which meet us on every side, we long for more certain guidance, and lament that the points in dispute had not been clearly defined at the very outset of Christianity.

But putting aside the fact that nations, like individuals, when cultivated in intellect, will always make use of their powers to reason away laws instead of obeying them; and that no rules, however stringent, will be sufficiently clear to bind those who have arrived at a period when the will is opposed to restraint; it is sufficient for our present purpose to remark what the Almighty, in His inscrutable wisdom, has evidently pointed out to us by His government of the world, namely, that a more perfect obedience, a purer morality, a higher tone of thought are to be attained by leaving the will and the judgment free—when reason and intellect have prepared the way for that freedom—than by any system of rules, however perfect, or any directions for guidance, however wise. With rigid rules, clearly defined ceremonies, absolutely commanded, we might doubtless have had a more perfect exhibition of the exterior of Christ's Church on earth. But that Church is ultimately destined for Heaven; and the quarrying and polishing of each separate stone, which is to form part of "the Building not made with hands," is undoubtedly carried on through the medium of those

sharp collisions and frictions which mar the perfection of its present beauty.

When religion was to be taught to the Jews in their ignorance, God allowed them to make no mistakes. When it was to be taught to the whole world in its intelligence, men were educated by the very means of their mistakes.

The deduction, as regards the education of individuals, is evident:

Rules for children; principles for adults.

Is there any axiom more true? May we not also ask, Is there any axiom more neglected?

Let us inquire of those who are commissioned for a time to take the place of parents—tutors and governesses—what is the frequent complaint made against the young people approaching to manhood and womanhood who are committed to their charge. Is it not that they fail in obedience, dutifulness, and respect to their parents? And what is too often the regret, the sorrow—we will not call it complaint—of these young persons, when they speak of their parents? Is it not that, as the expression is, they cannot get on with them—they are afraid of them—they think them fidgety, interfering, particular? It may seem a very hard thing to say; for there is no ideal to which the world clings more tenaciously than to that of the reciprocal affection and duty between parents and children—most especially between mothers and daughters. Every young mother believes that her little girl will grow up to be her cherished companion, and friend, and comfort: not because she is educated rightly, but simply because she is her daughter; and every child dreams of a

mother, who is to be its visible guardian angel: not because she is wise, and just, and tender, but because, in the imagination of a child, the office of such a visible guardian angel necessarily belongs to its mother.

To say that the existence of this hallowed affection can ever be a mere dream of the imagination, will be at once to raise an outcry of surprise and indignation. In asserting such a possibility, it may be said, we put aside the fact that the relation between a mother and her child is recognized as sacred by God, and deny the evident intentions of His Providence. If a mother's love and a child's grateful duty are not realities of natural affection, where can we look for anything on which, in this disappointing world, our yearning hearts may rest? The love between a mother and child is, indeed, most sacred. God forbid that we should not think it so! It is the manifest intention of Providence that, in every case, it should exist. It would be folly to deny it. But there are many other things, with regard to which the intention is evident—so evident, indeed, that it is impossible for any reasoning being to doubt it—whilst yet the failures are far more numerous than the fulfilment. Mankind are intended to be happy and healthy; but misery and sickness are the portion of nine-tenths of the human race.

Man's will, man's folly, are allowed, in a very awful manner, to mar the merciful intentions of Providence; and, perhaps, in no way do they work more fatally than in the relation between parents and children.

“My little one is such a darling, I cannot help

spoiling it!" The words sound almost sweet when uttered by a young mother. They speak of love, self-sacrifice, tenderness: yet are they the most cruel words which could ever escape her lips.

Not help spoiling it! Then she cannot help disobeying the positive injunction of God, neglecting the example He has Himself given. She cannot help laying up in store for her child, sin and sin's punishment; in this world, bitter regret, suffering, shame—it may be remorse, which shall never be repentance; and in the world to come—? If it were permitted us to question the unhappy ones for whom even a Redeemer's love is unavailing, how many, do we think, might be numbered amongst them, who were once—spoilt children? Rules for children—strict rules! We cannot say it to ourselves too often. Not severe rules, not given—that were a most grievous mistake—with any severity of manner; but definite rules, on the infraction of which punishment shall instantly be inflicted. The first of the Israelites, in the wilderness, who broke the rigid law of the Sabbath, died for his offence. God was then teaching a nation of children. When He afterwards gave His commands to the intelligent world, the Redeemer proclaimed the abrogation of the external rule, and declared that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."¹

This brings us to the second part of the axiom—Principles for adults.

What do we see, in the present day, with regard to its application to young persons?

It will, perhaps, be said, it does not concern them.

¹ St. Mark ii. 27.

They are not adults. True; but they are rapidly becoming such. The precise age when a youth becomes morally a man, or a young girl a woman, it may be difficult to determine. It will vary according to character. But no one will say that young people of fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen are, strictly speaking, children, or can, wisely, be treated as such. And, perhaps, no one actually professes to do so. The theory is, that as the mind enlarges, the judgment may be left more free. A right theory, consistent with common sense, and—as we have pointed out—with the dealings of God with man. But when we come to practice, what do we find? These children, such darlings, that it was impossible not to spoil them—are they darlings still? They can no longer be taken into their mother's lap, and fondled and coaxed. Their fits of infantine passion have become settled ill temper. Their petty wilfulness has been trained into disobedience. Their shyness and timidity have been carefully nursed into vanity and affectation. Their childish whims have been converted into selfishness. What is to be done with a disobedient, vain, affected, selfish, ill-tempered girl of, we will say, fifteen? Talk to her of principles; she has no notion of what you mean! Principles are understood by their application. Their meaning is to be learnt by degrees—by the help of rules and examples. There is no royal road for instruction in principles, any more than for instruction in any other branch of learning; and, as the young girl has the mind of a child, she must, it is supposed, be treated accordingly. She is placed therefore under a strict governess; she is watched, scolded, punished,

debarred from amusement, and taught to look upon herself as hopelessly wicked, and, in consequence, forced back upon the solitude of her own heart; and, meeting with no sympathy, she naturally shelters herself under a reserve, which is considered only another symptom of a cold heart. At length, considered totally unmanageable, she is sent away from home. If in this new sphere a better life should dawn upon her, will it not, probably, be years before her affections can be drawn towards the mother who so miserably spoilt her in childhood, and so hopelessly misunderstood her in youth?

Or, take another instance, not uncommon. We will suppose a child not to have been so utterly spoilt, but only overpetted, taught to think much of herself, to put herself forward, to give her opinion unasked, to be, in fact, conceited and wilful. These faults will assuredly not decrease as years advance. What we are apt to call conceit and wilfulness* is often only the natural result of a too rapid growth of the intellectual, as compared with the moral, powers. Minds outgrow their strength just as bodies do.

A clever girl, or even one who is not exactly clever, but who has been brought forward, and allowed to act and speak at twelve as if she were twenty, will, naturally, at fifteen or sixteen, form opinions of her own, and think herself competent to decide upon all questions with which she is, or is not, concerned. And this is very unpleasant to a parent. Little children, if forward and disagreeable, can be sent up into the nursery, and put out of sight; but a forward girl is an offence to a mother's vanity. She must be spoken to sharply—snubbed, as it is called;

and the young lady is very quick to discern what snubbing means, and to resent it. So she becomes disobedient and disrespectful, and the mother talks to her of duty, and obedience, and self-control, and, finding her words unavailing, becomes angry, and loses the respect of her child, and then follows a *scene*; and the gulf between the parent and the child, which has long been slowly opening, becomes wider; perhaps so wide, that it can never thoroughly close again. Who is to blame? The daughter, surely! She is no longer a baby. She is quite aware that she ought to obey and be respectful to her mother, and she has sense enough to see that her mother has right on her side. She ought to understand acting upon principle. Yes, indeed, she ought: she has arrived at the right age; but, then, whose duty was it to teach her to apply principle? Who ought, in childhood, to have educated her by rules based upon principle, and, through them, to have led her childish mind to the comprehension of the principle itself?

Let the fallow ground be first furrowed by careful and well-observed rules, and in those furrows we may drop the seeds of principles, with the certainty that they will produce a good and a plentiful crop; but, if we allow the ground to become hard and clotted, we may cast our principles upon it, but we must look to their being borne away upon the winds.

Or, once more. We will suppose a child to have been well and carefully brought up, made to obey, checked when forward, taught to be considerate and respectful, and then to have arrived at the age when reason and thought begin to develop themselves. A strong will, a clear intellect, and acute observation,

are perhaps exhibited early, and the mother recognizes the fact with pride. But the habit of rule is strong within her. She likes power—she has the self-confidence resulting from success. Her child is so charming; it is evident that the education has so far been successful, and how, then, can rules be laid aside? The young girl is so young, she must make mistakes; her mother must know best what is good for her. And the thought of having a heart, simple, unstained by the world, absolutely dependent upon one, is so very tempting both to affection and to vanity! The mother, therefore, continues her supervision. She expects to know every thought of her young daughter's mind, as in the days when the little child prattled at her knee. She thinks it right to be acquainted with everything connected with her correspondence and her young friendships. Conversations must be repeated, letters must be read; and in order to insure this, rules must be laid down. But the rules are irksome, simply because they are rules. The daughter has no friendship which her mother would disapprove. She neither writes nor receives letters of which she is ashamed; but she detests supervision. And she is beginning to differ from her mother upon some abstract points. She has opinions, tastes of her own; and she wants to express them freely. It would seem disrespectful, and it would certainly be painful, to state these opinions to her mother, because she knows that they are supposed always to be of one mind; so she longs to write and speak to others—to have the pleasure of thinking, and perhaps, in some cases, acting independently. But these rules, these restraints and

limitations, meet her at every turn. It is grievous to say, but her mother, good and excellent though she may be, is gradually assuming the character of a warder set over her, to watch that she does not escape from prison. Not that she really desires to escape; only she would like to feel that she might do so.

This is by no means an uncommon case; and it may be met with not only when girls are young, but when they are past what may be called youth, and yet are inmates of their mother's home. To govern adults, or those approaching to the age, by rules, is to ignore the first principles of reason, and utterly to destroy the happiness of domestic intercourse. When persons have reached what are called years of discretion, freedom is as essential to their moral, as air is to their physical, strength.

• It is not, however, to be supposed that what has been here said, implies that at any fixed age, such as fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, or at any precise subsequent period, government by rules may be laid aside, and government by principles adopted. It is a question of degree. The little child of two or three must be absolutely governed by rules, because it is only by means of temporary rules that it can be taught to submit itself to primary fixed laws. It can understand obedience: it cannot understand the love of God; obedience, therefore, is, for the time being, its primary law. The adult man or woman must (speaking of domestic life only) be left to the absolute government of principles, for if we attempt to lay down rules for young men and young women, we shall infallibly estrange their affections. Between

these two points there are many degrees, varying according to circumstances; and the part of wisdom in education is gradually to relax our rules, so that the perfectly obedient child may pass into the happy liberty of well principled youth, and the perfect freedom of full age, without any abrupt transition, but only with the consciousness that the strict yet loving government by rule exercised by a parent in infancy, has been succeeded by that much stricter, much sterner government by principle, which every human being must exercise over himself, if he would pass through this world with the respect of his fellow creatures, and enter upon the next with the approbation of his Maker.

It would seem scarcely necessary to add that in thus advocating the enforcement of rules for children, it is presupposed that they are rules based upon principle. Subjection to rules of any kind will indeed train the young mind to the habit of obedience, but it will never train it to goodness. The slave obeys the rule of his tyrannical master, but the moment he is left to himself, he obeys nothing but his own impulses. The test of the wisdom of our rules is the ease with which we may dispense with them when once the principle upon which they were based is firmly established. It is singular to remark how very few rules and what very rare punishments are required in the government, even of a child, who has in infancy been trained to strict obedience, based upon principle. The little one who, when a year and a half old, finds that it never has what it cries for, will require but a very small amount of checking and thwarting in its wishes when it is three or

four; because by that time it will fully have learnt that most difficult of all lessons to an indulged child—to take “No” for an answer.

So, again, the child of three, who, when told to go or come, refuses, and finds that an instantaneous punishment, however slight, follows its refusal, will need no threatening and scolding at five or six to compel it to obey. The child of five or six who finds that certain rules are laid down for its conduct, and that on the transgression of those rules a penalty is always inflicted, will, by the time it is nine or ten, keep a rule as strictly in its mother's absence as in her presence. At that age the irksomeness of obedience is lessened, because the child is quite able to understand the principle on which obedience rests; to see that it obeys its parents because they are the vicegerents of God, exercising authority from Him, and therefore claiming submission as a religious right. The sacredness of obedience once established, the parents' wishes, as well as their commands, become sacred. The child, though often unknown to itself, begins to act from a feeling of duty. “Such an action is not right, because my mother would disapprove; therefore I will not do it.”

Once fairly establish this idea of duty in the mind, and rules are comparatively needless, and at thirteen or fourteen the child is scarcely conscious of them. She goes and comes, she writes and speaks freely; and though a few directions may be necessary as guides and landmarks, there is no necessity to enforce them. The child enforces them upon herself. At fifteen or sixteen her task becomes more difficult: she is learning

to rule herself instead of to be ruled; and now the mother's duty changes. She is not so much called upon to command, as to counsel and advise; and because the child's will is one with hers, there is no need for severity in this office of adviser. Sympathy, tenderness, consideration, the full exhibition of that marvellous depth of affection which God has implanted in a mother's heart, all may be displayed with little or no check from external rules. And if we ask for the result, we may find it in the perfect confidence, the reverent devoted affection on the part of the child, and the loving delight and deep satisfaction on the part of the mother, which make the relationship between them perhaps the happiest, as it is certainly the holiest, of which our nature in its earthly affections is capable.

Is this an ideal picture? It need not be so: God intended it to be a reality. It is our own folly which makes it an ideal. We strive, it may be, to be strict, just, true, unselfish, and indulgent in our dealings with our children. But we begin with indulgence and end with strictness, instead of beginning with strictness and ending with indulgence; and the result is fatal.

If it be asked, why do we thus act? the answer will sound severe, but it will be very true. Because we are selfish. We love ourselves better than our children. There is nothing more tempting to a woman's tenderness than her little child of two years old; it is tempting even to those who are not mothers. The soft round cheek, the bright complexion, the silky hair, are so inviting to the eye, the broken words are so sweet to the ear, the

tottering steps appeal so trustingly for help, and the first demonstrations of awakening love are so inexpressibly winning, that it requires a self-denial greatly beyond that to which we have at all accustomed ourselves, to look grave or check, much more to punish. But ought it not to be equally difficult to check, reprove, or punish the disobedient girl of thirteen or fourteen? Her face is still young and fair, her voice is still sweet, her steps are tottering on a far more dangerous path; her love, when awakened, is a far more valuable treasure than that of the unconscious little one. Yes, but she is disrespectful, passionate, disobedient; she makes us angry; she vexes us. There lies the secret; it is self, after all.

An unselfish mother will punish her little child, though it may wring her heart to do so. She will never fear chilling its infant heart by wise strictness; for a mother's tenderness will make amends in an instant for the suffering inflicted. Very little children will bear a large amount of moral coercion, just as they will a large amount of physical coercion. It belongs to their age; to be compelled to obey is natural, and they never resent it; and it is the feeling of resentment which makes enforced obedience injurious to the moral character.

And so, also, an unselfish mother, if by any unhappy weakness she should have failed, by wise rules, to train her child to obedience in infancy, will be patient and forbearing when the consequences of that neglect are displayed in youth.

She will not then insist upon laying down rules, thwarting, and restraining. It is too late; restraints

which would have been light in childhood, are felt to be very heavy in youth. They will but increase irritability, and widen the difference. The mother has "sown the wind," and she must be prepared to "reap the whirlwind;" happy only if, by gentleness, love, sympathy, she can at length so far regain her child's affections as to win her confidence, and at last, through God's mercy, awaken principle.

But this, in almost all cases, is found to be a work that must be devolved upon others. Training away from home is required to mend what mistaken indulgence has marred. And after all, it will only be *mending*—the mark of imperfection will remain most probably for life.

Alas! that so few will think of this. Alas! that a direction the most obvious, the most reasonable, and, upon the whole, the most likely to be acknowledged in words, of all which God has given to guide us in education, should be so neglected, that it requires pages of expostulation and illustration to enforce it; and that, after all which can be said, it is probable that scarcely one in twenty will ever fully carry out into practice the axiom—Rules for children; principles for adults.

CHAPTER IV.

OBEDIENCE.

THE first object of a mother in educating her little child must, as it has been shown, be the enforcement of obedience. There is much to be said as to the principles on which this enforcement is to be based; but we will first inquire what is commonly understood by obedience.

A young mother will declare, "I always make my child attend to what I say. I had a struggle with it yesterday for a quarter of an hour, but I was the conqueror in the end."

A struggle of a quarter of an hour! Does that mean that the mother was coaxing, urging, entreating, threatening, for a quarter of an hour? Then she was all that time teaching her child what a power it had over her. She was instructing it in the strength of its own will, the effect of its pertinacity. True, she gained her own way, as it is called, at last; but she let the child know that it had a way also, and one which its mother found it very difficult to resist. And children are much more keen than we are apt to imagine, and they very soon learn that if they can but hold out long enough, they

will bring matters to a compromise, and so gain their object under another form.

This is not the notion of obedience given us in the Bible. God does indeed warn, entreat, threaten His people beforehand; but the act of disobedience once committed, punishment follows immediately.

Delay in obedience is disobedience. This truth ought to be implanted in the mind of a little child, even for its personal safety. It runs across the road when a carriage is coming: the mother calls it back; it obeys, and is saved; it disobeys, and is knocked down. There are many things analogous to this in morals. No one can tell what the effect of such delay may be. But one thing is certain, that instantaneous obedience is the only kind of obedience worthy of the name, and that years of miserable conflict between the mother and the child—conflict inevitably tending to the diminution of affection—will be spared if it can be attained. Instead of insisting upon a child's doing what it is told, punish it, however gently, because it does not do so, and there will be no need to insist on another occasion.

"My dear, I never speak twice," was the rule of one of the tenderest, most devoted of mothers; and her children blessed her for it throughout their whole lives.

And this mode of enforcing obedience by punishing disobedience will meet many very difficult cases, in which a child is unquestionably wilful, and yet in which it is quite out of the mother's power to make it do what is commanded. To refuse to speak, or to say a lesson, is the most common mode of tormenting with an obstinate child; and the mother deems it

necessary to carry out her commands, and begins with entreating, continues with threatening, and ends with prolonged punishment; and after all, perhaps, the child is victor upon the one subject in dispute. But why give it the opportunity? Punish it at once because it refused, and the whole question is set at rest, and without any struggle over the contested point. It must be owned this sounds stern, and as disobedience is a child's frequent fault, it may be supposed that the result of such a mode of training would be constant punishment.

But there is a caution to be given on the other hand—one without which it must be allowed that such a style of education will be severe. If we never allow our children to disobey us, we must take care what commands we lay upon them.

To come when called is an act in the power of every child, however young. To speak to a stranger is not really so; for the shyness belonging to its age stands in the way, and without meaning to be disobedient, the child cannot instantly overcome the feeling. In the one case obedience may safely be insisted upon; in the other, it is unwise to provoke a contest, and therefore the wish should be expressed rather as a request than a command. So, again, a little child *can* repeat after us any word which we may utter, and to refuse will be direct disobedience, and must be punished as such; but it *cannot* always remember a letter which it has learnt, and therefore, when we suspect it of obstinacy, instead of insisting upon its remembering, we shall do well to exact some little penalty for forgetfulness, and let the matter pass. In all cases the one great point to be observed

is to enforce what we command, and therefore not to weaken our own authority by unnecessarily commanding what we cannot enforce.

And when we speak of punishment, it must be remembered that every look or movement which expresses displeasure is more or less punishment to a very little child. The mere holding up of a finger, or looking grave, or speaking quickly and decidedly, will be felt to be such, and a rap on the hand will be actual severity, and be recollected for hours. And even as children grow older, sharp instant punishments will be found to be more efficacious, and less irritating to the temper, than penalties which are delayed, though the latter may in themselves be more gentle. To express decided anger, and send a child to her room for a couple of hours, makes a marked impression, and opens the door for sorrow and forgiveness, and the rest of the day may then be spent cheerfully. But to look calmly sad, to give a grave lecture, and say that the child must go to bed only half an hour before her usual time, makes the whole day a penance. The sense of being, as it were, under a cloud, deadens the wish to do better, and that must be a singularly good child who does not feel that it is scarcely worth while to try and improve, when punishment must follow at any rate.

With children and their parents, as with the parents and their God, without the sense of forgiveness there will be no real desire of amendment; and it is only by slow degrees and under certain circumstances (which may hereafter be considered) that any of us learn to dissociate the ideas of punishment and anger.

But as the child's mind opens, and reason develops, it will become necessary not only to exact and enforce obedience, but to show the grounds upon which the duty rests; and here we must look beyond the natural authority which God has delegated to parents, and inquire what is the origin of all law; for we may be sure that if we educate upon any principle short of the highest, if we base our actions upon any truth which is not fundamental, we shall in the end find that we have been reasoning upon a fallacy, and that error in practice is the result.

That the authority delegated to parents is not the original basis of a child's duty of obedience is at once evident from the fact that there may be cases in which to disobey a parent may be right. A wicked father, we will suppose, commands his child to steal. The child's duty is to refuse. But if the parent's commands were fundamentally binding, refusal could, under no circumstances, be permissible.

There must, then, be something higher than a parent's authority—a law upon which that law rests; and if the mother, whilst enforcing obedience, desires also to enforce principle, she must continually lead the child's mind beyond herself, and show that her commands are imperative because derived from the obligation of a superior law. Or, in other words, that *Law*, not *Will*, is the fundamental principle of moral government. This assertion carries us back very far, even to a point at which human reason fails—the mystery of the Being and Acts of the Most High.

"They err," says Hooker, "who think that of the Will of God to do this or that, there is no reason

besides His Will. Many times no reason known to us; but that there is no reason thereof I judge it most unreasonable to imagine, inasmuch as He worketh all things, not only according to His own Will, but *the counsel of His own Will*. And whatsoever is done with counsel or wise resolution, hath of necessity some reason why it should be done, albeit that reason be to us in some things so secret, that it forceth the wit of man to stand, as the blessed Apostle himself doth, amazed thereat: '*O the depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His Judgments, and His Ways past finding out.*' That Law eternal, which God Himself hath made to Himself, and thereby worketh all things whereof He is the Cause and Author, how should either men or angels be able perfectly to behold? Nor is the freedom of the Will of God any whit abated, let, or hindered by means of this; because the imposition of this Law upon Himself is His own free and voluntary act."¹

In this great mystery, the eternal obligation of Law, is doubtless to be found the primary necessity for the punishment of sin, so that, as it would seem, even the mercy of an Infinite God could not pardon without an atonement.

And as the Almighty teaches us this truth by the doctrines of revelation, so it is the one constant lesson conveyed to us by His working in nature. The first thing a child learns by his own experience is, that when he transgresses certain physical laws he inevitably incurs punishment. If he puts his

¹ Eccles. Pol., Book I.

hand too near the fire he is scorched ; if he runs out into the rain he is wet ; if he runs carelessly he falls down. These varied forms of suffering are the fixed result of the transgression of certain physical laws.¹

And so, as the child grows up, and its mind opens to the perception of the moral government of God, the same lesson is enforced by the observation of what are called the natural results of human actions. Intemperance, it is seen, brings disease ; carelessness in worldly affairs entails ruin ; falsehood and dishonesty are followed by distrust and civil punishment. The consequences of the actions here mentioned may not be universal, or in all cases inevitable, but the general law is sufficiently marked for the instruction of mankind ; and no one who suffers from the natural result of his own misconduct is allowed to impugn the justice of Providence. For neither the child nor the adult will usually regard the consequences of evil conduct as punishments inflicted by the direct Will of God ; though unquestionably they are so, since it is God who made the law, and affixed the penalty. The lesson which men chiefly learn from such experiences is that Law, whether physical or moral, is in itself sacred, and may not be transgressed with impunity.

One great distinction between moral and physical law must, however, be remarked. Moral law is absolutely one with the Will of God, and therefore is in its nature immutable. Physical law is only the result of that Will, and therefore may be altered whenever the Almighty, in His infinite Wisdom, shall

¹ Butler's Analogy, Part I. chap. ii.

think fit to do so. Truth, justice, benevolence, must always be included in the moral law of the universe, because they belong to the Nature of the Deity, but it is quite possible to conceive a state in which the physical laws of nature shall be so changed, as that fire may fail to burn, and water to drown.

As regards our present condition, however, the effect of both moral and physical law is the same, and we find, therefore, that the idea of abstract law meets us at every turn. We feel it before we recognize it. We act upon it without in the least understanding what it is which compels us to do so. For instance, the majority of men in a state will often for years quietly submit to laws manifestly injurious and unjust. What induces them to do so? It is not physical force; for if all who suffered from the laws would rise against them, no power could withstand their efforts. Neither is it subjection to the will of any one man, for these laws are the work of many men, the production of centuries; and a people who will rise against any single hard law, enacted by the will of some individual man, will submit almost uncomplainingly to a great many hard laws received as an heirloom, and in which there is not apparently the working of any present will. The principle which keeps them in subjection is simply that of obedience to abstract law; the strongest, the most enduring of all principles, because, whatever may be the form under which it is exhibited, it is essentially one with the Will of God.

And we shall find by experience that the mind of the youngest child, whose reason is beginning to exercise itself, can be influenced by this truth, because

the mind, like the body, is in a child as perfect in kind as it is in a full grown man ; and all the appeals which can naturally and rightly be made to the highest principles in man, may, in a lesser degree, and under a different form, be made to the highest principles in a child.

"I should like to let you have this pleasure, but I said that, if you were naughty, you should not have it, and therefore you cannot."

That is a very common simple speech ; hundreds of mothers, who are trying to bring up their children well, may have uttered it. But very few, probably, have ever looked into the deep, the wonderfully deep principle involved in it.

"I should like to do it;" there is the will. "I said that if you were naughty you should not have it;" there is the law : "therefore you cannot," there is the submission to law : and Law as opposed to Will. And when we look into the government of God, as made known to us in revelation, may we not, without irreverence, say that something of the same kind is discoverable ?

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." ¹

Who shall say that the Lord of all *could* not have saved Jerusalem if He had so willed ? Who shall say that a love so unutterably tender *could* not have

¹ St. Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

influenced that Will in favour of the chosen city? But there was something beyond love, beyond will—something which men will hereafter be compelled to acknowledge, it may be to their everlasting woe—the supremacy of Law. “Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”¹

It is only when the sacred obligation of abstract law is fully recognized, that any person can be safely entrusted with the task of putting that law into practice. The mother who governs her child upon Will has as many rules for its guidance as there are circumstances which call for her interference. She has no fear of making a law, because she has no fear of breaking it. She threatens and promises at random, because she knows that it is at her own option to break or to keep her word. And the result is, naturally, the wreck of all firm principle. The thought of punishment is without terror; the prospect of reward is without allurements. With no certainty before it, the moral nature of the child rests upon shifting sand, and is drifted in every direction, according to the accidental gusts of passion or impulse. The sternest discipline of unbending severity, so long as it is just, is better than such an education. Yet the mother who is most strict in adherence to her own laws will be the least likely to be severe in her legislation. Her threatenings will be few, as her promises will be cautious, for her law is made in order that it may be kept, therefore she will be careful in framing it.

¹ Numb. xxiii. 19.

The effect of the assertion of Law upon the mind of a child is very remarkable. It is as if the mother appealed to a principle to the sanctity of which its little heart at once responded. It will beg and implore, and even be pettish and disrespectful, so long as the refusal is based upon Will; but the very moment the idea of Law is suggested, it sinks instinctively into acquiescence. And the mother gains the respect of her child by the fact of this subjection of her own will, even though the law, to which she bends, may be one which she herself has made. There is nothing nobler, indeed, than the submission to abstract law, of one who has it in his power to command; for such submission is the most dignified form of obedience. He who knows not how to obey Law, knows not, indeed, how to govern; and for this reason, that such obedience is but another form of government, even, that of self by self, and before we can hope to rule others wisely, we must be able to rule ourselves.

CHAPTER V.

OBEDIENCE (*continued*).

BUT it may be asked, how is this principle of obedience to Law as distinct from obedience to Will to be inculcated, in the course of that every-day training by which a child's mind is formed? The question may be answered by searching more deeply into the moral government of God, as displayed in his dealings with his creatures.

There are two objects which are the aim of wise government; the discouragement of vice, and the encouragement of virtue. The first of these objects is to be attained by punishment, the latter by reward. God punishes the drunkard by disgrace and illness; He rewards the industrious man by respect and prosperity.

But the failure in obtaining reward is also a punishment; and it follows, therefore, that if a man will not be industrious, he will be punished as surely as the drunkard, only it will be negatively instead of positively.

Now, in these cases, it will be seen that both punishments and rewards are, what are called, natural; that is, they are stated, fixed, or settled.¹

¹ Butler's Analogy, Part I. chap. i.

No man is, or ought to be, angry with Providence, when, having omitted to sow his seed, he fails to reap the harvest. The mind acquiesces in a result which is known beforehand; and, even if a law be considered in itself severe, yet the carrying it out is recognized as just.

This truth is easy of application with regard to education, and it may be acted upon early and successfully.

A child, we will suppose, has certain lessons to learn; if repeated correctly, some fixed though trifling reward is to be obtained. It may be merely a ticket, or a good mark. But when the lesson is learnt imperfectly, the reward is lost. A very slight punishment it is; so slight, indeed, that the child scarcely recognizes that it is punishment; yet it is felt, and the result is greater attention for the future. In this instance, as in that of the husbandman, there is no sense of resentment; the fact that the penalty was natural or fixed takes from it the sting. Child and man, alike, are unconsciously influenced by a sense of the eternal obligation of abstract law.

And natural punishments have this great advantage, that they not only remove any suspicion of personal anger on the part of the inflictor, but they also open the door for mercy and consideration; so that the actual contriver of the punishment comes to be looked upon as its benevolent mitigator; We see this also in nature. An improvident man loses the blessings he might have secured, and brings himself into difficulties. They are the natural punishment of his improvidence, and he acknowledges this. But God sends him friends who assist him,

and his heart is touched with gratitude, and he is brought to own the benevolence of the very Being who, in fact, inflicted the suffering.

So a child, by forgetfulness, naturally loses some settled reward; but upon consideration of the circumstances, the mother interposes, and, though she will not bestow the reward which has been lost, she gives something which makes the disappointment less, and the child is full of love and thankfulness. Or, again, even where positive punishment is inflicted, the fact of making it natural takes away half its sting. Suppose two children to be equally untidy in their habits: on a certain occasion one is punished in some unexpected mode, according to its mother's will, and feels herself injured and resentful; the other accepts, as a natural consequence, a fixed amount of forfeit, and is vexed with herself, but never considers for an instant that she is treated hardly. Such natural laws may, indeed, be foolishly multiplied or misapplied; but whatever blunders we may make, either in forming or in carrying them out, will, we may be assured, be infinitely less prejudicial to the moral character of our children, than those which result from punishments or rewards unwisely given as occasion arises. It may even be said that an education carried on with perfect temper, perfect judgment, yet without general fixed rules, will be less efficacious in forming the character for life, than one greatly inferior to it in these respects, but in which definite rules are laid down and fixed, and natural punishments follow as the consequence of their infraction.

The one is the government of Will—wise and

good indeed, but nevertheless only Will. The other is the government of Law, and when the impression of the authority of Will is removed from the mind, the impression of the authority of Law will remain.

But the pressure of natural laws is most felt when the will begins to be exercised. Very little children have not the power or opportunity of running counter to either physical or moral laws, except in a slight degree. They are for the most part moved by the will of others. The establishment of domestic natural laws belongs, therefore, more to the schoolroom than to the nursery. Natural laws also are intended for the guidance of daily conduct, to keep us right in lesser matters. They do not provide for greater contingencies. A man who commits a great crime is not punished by natural, but civil law—although civil law, when strictly examined, will be found to be in one sense natural also¹—that is, the fact of punishment by a civil tribunal is natural, though the precise extent of the punishment is not. In like manner, a child committing some great offence, or exhibiting some remarkable goodness, must be punished or rewarded in some extra degree. But, in every case, the object of a wise government will be the same, to stamp upon the mind the idea of a moral law apart from the will of the ruler, and to which all must alike submit.

It is this idea which, when carried out in all the varied ramifications of human obligation, produces at last the principle of duty; and the superiority of the obedience based upon this recognition, over that

¹ Butler's Analogy, Part I. chap. ii.

which rests merely upon necessity, or even affection, is obvious to all.

But, it will perhaps be said, by thus showing the obligation of abstract law, are we not in danger of encouraging a formal obedience, which will in the end produce a spirit of self-righteousness? Is not the obedience of a Christian based upon love rather than upon law?

In answer to this, it must be remembered that what we are discussing here is only the right theory of education, so far as it is placed in our own power. We can make a child obedient to law. We cannot fill its little heart with love to God. But if we do our part, trusting to our Master's aid, and praying to Him for guidance, we may be quite sure that God will do His.

And let it be granted—though only for the sake of argument—that a child brought up in strict obedience to law, may, when he grows up to man's estate, be in danger of regarding that obedience with complacency, instead of humbling himself before God for his unworthiness; is therefore obedience to law a sin? Because a man may pride himself upon his justice, his truth, and integrity, are justice, truth, and integrity evil? "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid!"¹

But the true statement of the case is very different. The man who piques himself upon his obedience to the moral law, does so simply because he does not know what that law involves. We are accustomed to speak of the moral law as limited to the obvious commands of the decalogue; or, at least, as including

¹ Romans vi. 1, 2.

only those more extended applications of them which our Blessed Lord has given us in his sermon on the Mount. But, as Bishop Butler has plainly shown, the revelation of himself which God has been pleased to make in Christianity, extends the moral law much beyond this. "The office of our Lord being made known, and the relation He stands in to us, the obligation of religious regards to Him is plainly moral, as much as charity to mankind is; since this obligation arises before external command, immediately out of that His office and relation itself."¹ The same may be said of the office of the Holy Spirit, and of all the duties which necessarily arise from the truths made known to us by revelation. They are all moral, all based upon eternal immutable law; all therefore to be obeyed.

And let any one, be he child or man, strive heartily to obey that law, and where will be his self-complacency? Is not the truest saint most often the deepest penitent, because in his earnest striving to fulfil the law, he awakens to the consciousness of the frequency of his transgressions?

The principle of obedience to law—as law, is undoubtedly the only sure basis of moral goodness. But we do not find this truth practically admitted. What are the openly acknowledged wishes of the generality of parents—mothers especially? One longs that her little one may fully return her affection. Another exults in the thought that her child will be absolutely dependent upon her for happiness. A third trusts that, in consequence of a wise system of education, her children and herself may always be

¹ Butler's Analogy, Part II. chap. i.

one in feeling, principle, and opinion. But how few look upon the immortal beings to whom they have given birth, as endued with independent wills, destined to walk in independent paths, and therefore requiring, above all things, the guidance not of a mother's will, or a father's law, but of those eternal principles of right, which are adapted to every variety of character, and every conjunction of circumstances.

And yet, after all which can be said in favour of a character thus based upon submissoin to abstract law, or in other words to duty, it must be owned that it is not very attractive to the imagination. There are even persons who honestly own that they dislike the idea of duty; who would prefer to see a child acting upon impulse; who put comparatively little value upon a kind action, when it is prompted by a sense of right, instead of a sudden emotion. A hasty consideration of such asserted preferences would induce a calm-minded person to turn from them as unreasoning folly. But it may be questioned whether they strictly deserve the name. Duty—such as these persons picture it to themselves—is a very cold, dry, almost a repulsive principle. It never raised any human being to the elevation of a saint, and it would in vain knock for admittance, at the gates of Heaven. And why? Because it is not duty, but only a portion of it. Men take a part for the whole, and marvel because the distorted image they have formed does not attract their reverence. God, indeed, tells us to follow duty, and we suppose that we obey Him, when we strictly honour our parents, control our tempers, are strictly pure, rigidly honest, true in word

and deed. But does not God also tell us to trust our salvation to our Redeemer—to give our hearts to Him? Does He not call upon us to be tender, sympathizing, repentant, and humble? Is the proud man obedient to God's law merely because he never infringes the law of external morality? Is the selfish man ruled by duty, because he walks uprightly in the sight of his fellow-men, and so never falls into open sin? Duty is a very large word, infinitely larger than our thoughts can imagine, for it is co-extensive with the perfections of the Almighty. "Thy commandment," says the Psalmist, "is exceeding broad." Once only has mankind been permitted to see its full exemplification. Who will dare to say that the character of the Saviour of the world would have been more winning to our affections, if He had been less obedient, less devoted to duty?

It is, indeed, a cruel mistake we make, when we allow anything short of abstract duty, in its perfection, which is therefore duty to God, to be the ground of our children's moral actions. Their affection for ourselves may apparently produce equally good results for a time; but there will surely come a point at which, like the efforts of the Egyptian magicians, the power of love's sorcery will fail. Time and change of circumstances tell sadly even upon the tenderest of earthly feelings; and though it be granted, as well it may be, that the beginnings of duty in the mind of a child are generally cold, and devoid of that direct recognition of God which converts moral into religious principle, yet it is a great unkindness to allow the early, impressible days of childhood to pass, without the formation of those habits of obedience to law

which, when the heart is more awakened, will make the ways of religion "pleasantness, and all her paths peace." The one continually recurring lamentation of those who in later years have turned from sin to godliness, is the weakness of their resolution. Now the very strength, the bone and sinew of resolution, is obedience to abstract law—to law, even though self-imposed. The child who is made to do what he has said he will do, simply because he has said it, who is obliged to keep his promise because he made it, who is taught that he is bound by an engagement because it is an engagement, may have but little thought of religion, and no conscious love to God. But when at length he does open his eyes to the reality of his position in this world, when he does seek to live for Heaven and Eternity, those habits of submission to abstract right and obligation, will be of more worth to him than all the excitement of feeling, however intense, because they will, through God's grace, enable him to keep his resolutions. They are the means, the appointed channels, through which a blessing is bestowed upon his efforts to do God service.

And—which is particularly to be remarked—they are absolutely independent of intellectual power. Strength of mind, consistency, firmness of purpose, are to be found in the uneducated, the otherwise weak, and even deficient in intellect. The little child may and often will possess them, when the man whom nations admire is wanting in them. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"¹ *Can*, meaning not impossibility

¹ Gen. xxxix. 9.

as regards the will, for which, in the case of temptation, there is no *can*; but the moral impossibility of breaking a law.

This is the great safeguard for all; but if we wish it to be effectual, it must be acquired early. Let the seed-time of childhood pass, and it may never be ours. And what life is without it—how wasted, shattered—it may be utterly ruined and degraded—we may each ask ourselves, if not from the sorrowful testimony of our own conscience, yet from the memory of some wrecked life, which will surely recur to us, when we tell to ourselves the tale of the spoilt children of impulse, whose course we have watched from their cradle, to their sad, perhaps even dishonoured, grave.

CHAPTER VI.

JUSTICE.

Obedience, based upon the recognition of abstract law, is, we have seen, the primary object of all sound education. But abstract law must, of necessity, be presented to the mind in various forms, in order that it may be rightly appreciated. So, light must be divided into the prismatic rays before we can avail ourselves of it for the purpose of life; and the first form under which the idea of abstract law must be brought before a child, so as to be available for its sound education, is that of justice.

That this principle lies at the foundation of all wisdom and goodness will at once be seen, if we consider that justice is but another word for practical truth. Men are unjust in their dealings, because in their actions they pretend to be what they are not, or to do what they do not do. They are unjust in their judgments, because those judgments are founded upon untruths. Justice, like law (from which indeed it is inseparable), appeals instantly and directly to the highest principles of man's being; and the sense of justice will always be found peculiarly keen in a child, because the nature made in the Image of God, though now distorted and

degraded, has not, at that early age, been defaced by sophistry and self-interest.

In mature age, we become so accustomed to meet with injustice, and, if we are at all sincere with our own hearts, are so conscious of being guilty of it ourselves, that we learn to look upon it almost as a necessity. We instinctively resign ourselves to it for the present, looking forward to the day when all shall finally be set right. And the very fact of the tenacity with which we cling to the prospect of this final restitution of all things to their true position, shows how entirely the sense of justice is a part of the original constitution of man's nature.

And thus we find that God's Justice was the first great attribute of His Being revealed to the Jewish nation in their condition of childhood. "The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward."¹ And as the sacredness of abstract law was declared when it was made known that "the soul which sinned should die," so the distinction between wilful sins, and sins of negligence, was the just modification of that law when applied to a race burdened with infirmity.

The same principle of strict justice was exhibited in a practical form in the very commencement of the education of the Jewish people. The first act of Moses, when he began his direct government of the Israelites, was to appoint judges, who were to hear and decide all cases of dispute, "able men,

¹ Deut. x. 17.

such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness." ¹ None might take a gift from the rich, "for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous;" ² but neither might any "countenance a poor man in his cause." ³

It was by judges that the Jews were ruled when owning no sovereign but the Almighty. And in after years, when the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and demanded that Samuel should make them a king, their plea was that his sons walked not in their father's ways; that "they turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." ⁴

So, again, the faithless request being granted, and Samuel about publicly to withdraw from his office, he ended his indignant, yet earnest, expostulation, with the question, "Whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith?" ⁵

And they said, "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand." ⁶

It would be useless to multiply illustrations. The constantly repeated charge of the prophets against the kings and priests of Israel and Judah, was that they abhorred judgment, and perverted all equity." ⁷ And when those who would fain have purchased pardon by penance or sacrifice, inquired wherewith they should "come before the Lord, and bow" themselves "before the high God," ⁸ they were

¹ Exod. xviii. 21.

² Exod. xxiii. 8.

³ Exod. xxiii. 3.

⁴ 1 Sam. viii. 3.

⁵ 1 Sam. xii. 3.

⁶ 1 Sam. xii. 4.

⁷ Micah iii. 9.

⁸ Micah vi. 6.

answered by the solemn warning, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? " ¹

Justice first, mercy and humility afterwards ; because without justice, mercy and humility must be unreal.

And does not the history of God's dealings with the Jews teach us the same lesson ? His favoured servants, in so far as they sinned, met with no partial treatment. Jacob deceived his father, and was, in his turn, deceived by Laban. Moses followed the example of the Israelites, and—though but in one instance—showed impatience and faithlessness, and, like them, he died on "this side Jordan," and never entered upon the land of promise. David was the man after God's 'own heart—the man who, above all other men, loved his Maker with a fervour of devotion which seems scarcely to belong to human imperfection—but he committed a complicated, deadly sin, and though he repented, and was pardoned, yet from that hour the sword never departed from his house.

And so also, in like manner, as we may all have had occasion to observe, there are those whom God specially loves, whose characters are most in accordance with His own attributes ; but the world moves on its appointed course, and its natural laws are not stayed in order to save them from suffering. The good man who acts unwisely is punished. The bad man who acts prudently reaps in this life his reward. ²

¹ Micah vi. 8.

² The writer has no wish to enter upon the very difficult and intricate inquiries connected with the perfection of God's moral

Thus must it be with us in our government of our children, with respect to the rules which we lay down for them ; for as obedience is the foundation of all virtue in the child, so justice is the foundation of all good government on the part of the parent. The history of our lives will probably be a convincing testimony, if any were required, to the truth of this assertion. Very few, probably, are they who, in looking back upon the days of their childhood, do not feel that in some instances they were treated unjustly. If they examine still more closely, they will, in all probability, find that this memory is a rankling one—that they cannot crush it, though they may turn aside from it. It will from time to time start up, chilling some thought of love, some fond recollection of early happiness. It calls, as it were, for expiation : it cannot be softened by the soothing influence of time : it can scarcely even be subdued by the teaching of charity. Such a memory is a very valuable lesson. It is better than any sermon. Parents educate their children unwisely, because they forget that they have ever been children themselves. They read books upon education, searching for principles and suggestions ; and they do not see that God has written upon their own hearts truths to which the wisdom of philosophers is folly. The experience

government, seen imperfectly, as it must be, in this world. All that is here asserted is—that which every one who considers the question carefully must acknowledge—that certain rewards and certain punishments are in this world annexed to certain courses of conduct, and that whatever may be in other respects a man's virtues or vices, he is in those special instances rewarded or punished according to the natural laws which are alike for all.

of a child is a guide for the instruction of a child. What ye felt, and thought, and suffered, our children will feel, and think, and suffer like us; and if we bear about with us the memory of injustice, and feel that it has a voice, even now, crying from the depths of the past, let us, above all things, as we value our children's love, their reverence, and their obedience, guard against injustice in ourselves.

Such an one is the mother's pet, and therefore, in her eyes, always in the right! It may be the eldest,—the first awakener of her unextinguishable love; or the youngest—the plaything, who is indulged because it is the youngest; or the only boy, who is the mother's pride, because he is to be his father's representative. Whichever it may be, the result is the same. The balance of the family is upset by a sense of injustice, and the wisdom exhibited in other respects in the government of the children will fail to insure their goodness and their happiness.

And yet, it may be said, preferences must exist. One child is very tractable, another very much the reverse; it is impossible to feel alike to both. Perfectly true; but there is no injustice in preferring obedience to disobedience, good temper to bad. An unjust preference is founded upon some qualification apart from moral goodness. We are not answerable, indeed, for such a feeling, but we are very greatly answerable for showing it. It may be difficult for a mother to check her natural love, and punish the child in whom she delights, and reward the child who creates only an ordinary affection; but if she does not do so when necessary, she is sowing seeds of discord which will surely bear bitter fruit in Time, if not

in Eternity. And even if the preference is justifiable—if it is founded upon moral worth—it will in no way allow with impunity of the slightest injustice. Children are very quick in discerning partiality, and the moment it is perceived they lose their respect and their confidence. We can all sympathize with this feeling: we are all indignant when we meet with prejudice and partiality; and yet strict justice is the very rarest of all qualities. Many things, indeed, go by the name of justice: unsparing strictness, for instance, a stern condemnation of anything which looks like wrong, an unbending adherence to a certain line of conduct. Men pique themselves upon such characteristics. They consider them indications of a firm, strong mind. They forget that God's Justice has reference to times and circumstances, to opportunities and temptations; and that if our justice is to be like His, it must take all such considerations into account, or it will become injustice. Therefore it is that men are unjust. They are so not willingly, nor consciously, but because they are indolent or impatient, biassed by affection or interest. They decide without inquiry; they speak and act upon impulse. And parents are by no means exempt from these failings. They may have the greatest desire for their children's good, but they are not therefore free from selfishness. It requires time and trouble to investigate every little case brought before them. It perplexes the mind, and troubles the conscience. The mode adopted by the Irish judge who, having heard one side of a question, and being convinced by it, felt it a mere waste of time to listen to the other, suits with the press of occupation or amuse-

ment better than a careful search into facts, which may probably lead to the discovery of unpleasant truths.

And there are certain broad statements upon which it is always easy for haste or indolence to fall back when questions are complicated, or demand an inconvenient expenditure of time. A good child is always more likely to be in the right than a bad one; therefore it is supposed that the report of the former is safely to be admitted against the latter. This is an error common to persons who would shrink back, indignant, at the accusation of injustice. Or, if it should be a case of favouritism, the elder child, who is the pet, must necessarily know better than the younger one, who is not so. Or, on the other hand, elder children are always tyrannizing over the younger ones. Let any one of these assertions be firmly rooted in a mother's mind, and the hope of justice is vain, for every question is prejudged. The children know it to be so. They will not appeal to their mother, for they believe it to be useless. But natural instinct leads them to seek for justice amongst themselves. They establish a species of moral Lynch law, and strive to restore the balance of justice by injustice. The favourite is disliked, teased, perhaps persecuted. The mother's preconception is strengthened. Still greater partiality is shown, still greater revenge taken, and the result is a breach of family harmony which may last for years.

And all this time the mother is desirous of acting rightly. She even believes that she is doing so. The evidence of facts is before her, and it is in vain to dispute them. Only—she was in fault at the com-

mencement, she began with injustice, and the end is discord.

It is not asserted that a family brought up upon a system of injustice will never turn out well. God uses the faults of parents and teachers as means of discipline for the children; and if only those could be expected to do rightly who are brought up upon right principles, the world would be in a much worse condition even than it is. But if children treated unjustly ever become religious and high principled, it will be not because of their education, but in spite of it. And in scarcely any case will the parent receive that reward of affectionate respect, which is the only reward really to be valued.

It is a matter for very serious self-examination in all persons who have the care of children, especially all who are conscious of being themselves excitable, changeable, sensitive, carried away by impulse. A poetical temperament, verging upon that of a genius, is peculiarly liable to the aberration of moral principle which leads to injustice. Persons possessed of such a temperament make romances with regard to their children's characters. They idealize them; they never see them in their true colours. They are dazzled by what they think to be beauty, or talent, and upon these supposed gifts they engraft certain virtues, which, in all probability, do not exist at all, or at least only partially; and when called upon to decide some question concerning the children, it is upon this imaginary basis that they rest a decision, which, probably, in nine cases out of ten, will be unjust.

But indolence, impatience, and partiality are not

the only sources of injustice. A preoccupied mind, or even the weakness and irritability consequent upon ill-health, will produce the same results. To be strictly just, requires, in fact, a very watchful and continual self-discipline; and we must all know that to theorize upon a wise system of education for a child is easy, and to practise a similar system of education upon ourselves very difficult. And yet if we do not practise before we begin to theorize—still more, if we do not carry on that practice unremittingly, we may cast our books of instruction into the fire, and scatter our lessons of wisdom to the winds, for they can be of no avail to us. A sincere love of truth, calmness, patience, good sense, and self-control, all are essential to justice. How often are they to be found united in one character? How often do we meet with any person of whom it may be said “he or she is perfectly just?”

To act justly ourselves is, indeed, most difficult, and yet more difficult must it be to enforce the duty upon children. But this consideration must be left till we enter upon the inquiries connected with the necessity of education in truth, which is the foundation and corner-stone of justice.

CHAPTER VII.

LOVE EXHIBITED IN TENDERNESS AND SYMPATHY.

ABSTRACT law, implicit obedience, strict justice! They are very dry-sounding, uninviting names—one can fancy a young mother assenting hastily to what has been said about them, because she does not know how to express her dissent; and then turning away, and secretly rejoicing, in the thought, “It is all very good, very right; it may succeed with some, but it does not suit me. My child shall be brought up upon a principle of love.”

And is the young mother wrong? Is not God Love? If we are ever to be like Him, must we not each, in our measure, be now filled with Love? And when Faith shall be no longer needed, and Hope shall have become present joy, will not Love abide for ever?

The mother is right. Her instinct is a true one. If love is not named as the foundation stone of all right influence and guidance, it is because, in a mother's breast, it is presupposed always to exist. There is no need to tell her that she is to love. Nature has taught her the duty, and enabled her to perform it. But there is great need that she should be told how to show her love wisely; and great

need, also, that others, who are entrusted with the task of education, and yet have no such maternal instinct to assist them, should be enabled so to regard the children entrusted to them, as to deal with them in the spirit of love, though they may not have the actual feeling of affection.

There is much talk of love in the present day. It is to be feared that a large portion of it is unreal. We see advertisements in the newspapers, which tell us that for twenty, thirty, forty pounds a year, young people are to receive all the care and tenderness belonging to a home. We hear of the interesting charge which a governess undertakes, when she receives a pupil; and of the anxious solicitude of those who are appointed to stand in the place of parents. It is all very well. It may be very true. For twenty pounds a year, a child may receive the same amount of care and tenderness which it received at home, for there it will, perhaps, have had neither. A governess may look upon her pupil as an interesting charge; and those who stand in the place of parents may feel anxious solicitude; but experience, unfortunately, shows that a great deal of all this profession of feeling is mere educational cant, and the first thing for us all, if we would perform our task well—whatever it may be—is to look at it truly.

There is a light, in which every child, for whom we are in any way responsible, may be regarded, which will at once awaken interest. The immortal soul is preparing for Heaven or for Hell, and we are called upon to assist in the preparation. But that thought is not one which will always be present to us.

There is another light, the light of our own past trials, our sufferings, and our sins, which will touch our hearts to the quick, when we look at the children standing at the entrance of the weary way which we have traversed, and think of their fearlessness, their ignorance, their bright expectations, and the certainty of their disappointment. But the matter-of-fact business of daily life leaves but little leisure for such considerations.

Education is no matter of romance, either for the mother or governess. It is a wearing, fretting, unexciting duty. It is conversant, indeed, with principles high as the heavens, perfect as God's perfection, and deep as the mystery of His Being, but those principles are exhibited under forms in which they can often scarcely be recognized, even by persons who think most seriously. The irritation caused by forgetfulness, negligence, inattention, petty deceit, little vanities, hasty tempers—these are the trials which present themselves, and which must be met at the moment, without preparation, without reflection. Where is the romance of love which will withstand them? Where is the governess, or even the mother, who can, in such case, trust to her affection as her guide?

And yet without affection, law is powerless, justice has no lasting influence. What is to be done?

First, above everything, make no pretence. What we do not feel, let us not profess to show. If we have not the feeling of affection, flattering words and caresses are but shams; and no one is so quick as a child in discovering a sham, or in resenting it.

But there is a state of mind always connected

with affection, and there are words and actions consequent upon affection, which yet may be so far dissociated from it as to be exhibited in perfect sincerity, where the actual feeling of affection, as it is commonly understood, does not, and cannot, from circumstances, exist.

We see one who is a stranger to us, suffering; we are not perhaps acutely touched by the sight, yet we speak gently and tenderly—we show sympathy in our manner and words, and we do our utmost to relieve the suffering. No one accuses us of insincerity in this, though probably we could not have been more kind if the sufferer had been the dearest friend we possessed. The only distinction is, that in the one case tenderness and sympathy are the result of a mind trained to consider the needs of others—whilst in the other they would have been spontaneous.

And it is this phase of affection—this exhibition of tenderness and sympathy based upon principle, as distinct from impulse—which will be found especially requisite if we would make the task of education easy and pleasant. It is the key by which to unlock the closed doors of the stubborn heart.

If we would know how to apply it wisely, we may once more look to the teaching of the Bible.

The first thing which strikes us in connection with the subject, is the different relationship in which God is exhibited to His creatures in the Jewish and in the Christian dispensation. To the Jews He was at first the great Lord of all, the Eternal Jehovah, observant of their misery, listening to their cry, and interposing to rescue them from suffering.

God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, "I

have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore, say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments.”¹

The power of God to protect and to save was the first lesson which the Jews had to learn. It was taught them by miracles, for miracles were the exhibitions of Omnipotence, and it was not until actual experience had convinced the Jews—if anything could convince them—that personal love and tenderness were mixed up with this Providential care, that Moses could make a still closer appeal to their feelings, and say, “Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not He thy father that hath bought thee? Hath He not made thee, and established thee? Of the Rock that begat thee, thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. And when the Lord saw it, He abhorred them, because of the provoking of His sons, and of His daughters. And He said, I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.”²

The title of Father thus claimed by Moses for the Sovereign Lord of all, is but seldom repeated in the Old Testament. David, indeed says, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them

¹ Exod. vi. 5, 6.

² Deut. xxxii. 6, 18, 19, 20.

that fear Him."¹ And by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, the Almighty declares, "I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born."² And again, as in the prophecy of Malachi, "If then I be a Father, where is Mine honour?"³ But the spirit of the Old Testament, it will scarcely be disputed, is that of the government of a just, and watchful, and loving Lord; apart from His people, and guiding them by His unerring wisdom, rather than by His personal sympathy.

Under the Gospel dispensation, the relationship between God and His people is instantly and marvellously altered. "My Father and your Father—my God and your God!" Who has ever heard these words, and pondered upon them, without a thrill of wondering love, which, could it but continue, would make every labour of obedience light, every pang of suffering easy to be borne? When He who was one with the Father became one also with us; when He "bore our grief and carried our sorrow," and was made "like unto us in all things," sin only excepted, our relationship to God became a new relation. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."⁴

The duties which were difficult to the Jew became easy to the Christian. The obedience which required threatening, and warning, quick punishment, and present reward under the Old Testament, was the natural, almost involuntary impulse of the follower of Christ under the New.

¹ Psalm ciii. 13.

² Jer. xxxi. 9.

³ Mal. i. 6.

⁴ Rom. viii. 15.

Why, then, were not the Jews treated as the Christians? Why did not God vouchsafe to dwell visibly among them—to be one with them,—to give them evidence of His personal sympathy, and to win their obedience by the love of the human, rather than the awe inspired by the Divine Nature?

There must be an answer to that question, hidden amongst the unfathomable mysteries connected with God's scheme for man's salvation, and especially with the fact that the time for His full revelation of Himself in "the Man Christ Jesus" was not yet fully come. Into this it would be presumptuous irreverence to inquire. But there is another answer lying on the surface of thought, which will be sufficient for the subject now under consideration. The Jews were a nation of children;—and the first impression which it is necessary to imprint upon a child's mind, if we would permanently influence it for good, is that which is awe, when directed to God—reverence, when directed to man.

This is not in accordance with the theories of the present day. We have cast off our old notions of respect for age, authority, position. We believe that if such feelings are to be entertained at all, they must be the result of love, not its foundation. But the Bible and reason would seem to teach us otherwise. There can be no doubt that in dealing with the Jews, God first impressed them with the sense of His sovereignty, and His power; and then exhibited to them His tenderness, under the form of watchful care for their happiness. Even as Moses reminded them, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years

in the wilderness.* Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God—who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.”¹

It is true, no doubt, that in some peculiar instances a closer, more human sympathy, if the expression may be allowed, is observable. Moses, Samuel, and especially David, approached their Maker with a freedom of feeling which belongs almost to the Christian dispensation; but they were taken out of the Jewish people—exalted above them. They were not in the condition of childhood, and, therefore, did not require its discipline. Their minds had reached that more advanced state in which tenderness is insufficient to satisfy the cravings of affection; but when the desire for personal sympathy is awakened, and the fulness of devotion is excited only as this desire is satisfied.

And does not reason teach us a somewhat similar lesson? A child is brought into the world perfectly helpless, and this helplessness lasts much longer than that of any of the animal creation. Its first experience connected with its fellow-creatures is that of absolute power. It lies in its nurse's arms, and whatever may be its feeble will, it is useless to exert

¹ Deut. viii. 2, 4, 11, 15, 16.

it. Upon this follows the experience of watchful care; but it is a care exerted only for its physical wants, for as yet the child has no mental needs, and neither will it, as a general rule, have any which involve suffering, and demand aid, for several years. There may be precocious children of six or seven years of age, who begin to perplex themselves with all the difficulties belonging to sixteen or seventeen, but they are exceptions, and it is of the generality we would now speak. Young children do, indeed, think, that is, they ask puzzling questions, but not such as would show that their little minds are disturbed beyond the moment. Their griefs, like their joys, are either physical or imaginative. They have no real mental trials, and therefore sympathy, in the strict sense of the word, as implying mutual mental and moral comprehension, is not required by them.

But tenderness they do require, and that very greatly, for they are timid and nervous, and shrink from those who deal roughly with them; and so we find that gentle words and loving caresses are the teachings of nature—the instinctive impulse of a mother's affection. Yet this tenderness is not in the least incompatible with absolute authority on the one side, and a sense of reverence on the other. In fact, when persons try to lessen reverence by placing themselves on a level with their little ones, instead of winning them, they are actually offending against natural instincts. The children were born powerless, in order that they might trust. They were born ignorant, in order that they might respect. They have as yet no mental development to enable them

so to embrace the idea of God's Providence that it may be a support to them. This abstract idea is exhibited to them under a human form. Parents are a little child's Providence, and parents, therefore, are naturally intended to be loved, because they are revered—not revered because they are loved. This truth is by no means universally recognized.

We may sometimes see persons endeavouring to win their children's affections by making them their playfellows; by allowing them, as they say, to be perfectly free, or, in other words, to take liberties. We find mothers waiting upon their children; making themselves their slaves. We sometimes hear of a young mother's determination to do everything for her child with her own hands; not even to let a nurse dress it, because she desires to make it cling wholly to herself.

All this sounds well, but there is surely a fallacy in it, for the result is not quite in accordance with the intention. We do not find that these children, the engrossing object of their mother's affection when little, remain so entirely devoted to her when their minds enlarge. She has been their playfellow, their slave, their nurse; but she forgot that she was their mother, and the time has arrived when they have given up their infant games, when they are beginning to wait upon themselves, and no longer require a nurse, and of course they no longer require her.

And let a mother strive as she will to win her child's love by this unremitting attention to its little wants, she must, in the end, find herself incapable of contending with the superior attractions of a good nurse.

A baby, for instance, is sent for to the drawing-room. It is frightened by the sight of strangers, and turns instantly to its nurse. A little child is ill and fretful, and it is soothed by the home atmosphere of the nursery, and is, therefore, sent there. It feels pain, and immediately complains to the nurse. It is, in short, absolutely free with her, as it is with no one else. And mothers are sometimes distressed at this. They are even jealous of the affection shown the nurse. Nothing can be more absurd. It is the child's physical helplessness appealing to physical support; and so long as the mind is undeveloped, the instinct of helplessness will teach it to turn to the quarter from whence it can most readily obtain support. So, again, the mother attempts to be the child's playfellow, and for a time the little one is satisfied, whilst, exerting its infant tyranny, it compels its mother to amuse it; but give it a companion of its own age, and the mother is set aside. The one is a reality, the other a sham, and the child feels this instantly.

The mistake in all these cases is that of confounding tenderness with sympathy. The former belongs to infancy, the latter to advanced childhood and youth. We cannot sympathize with a little baby, or even with a child of three or four years of age, for sympathy, in such cases, implies the being able to imagine ourselves in a state of infancy, to feel as the child feels. And even when the mind begins to open, and the moral nature to develop, sympathy must, at first, take the form of condescension, rather than of participation. The child's mind is formed for this; it does not expect more, and if more be

attempted, the position assumed will be false, and reverence will be destroyed.

It must not, however, be supposed for a moment, that in saying this it is intended to imply that a mother should not always watch over the physical needs of her children, and when needful provide for them herself. There are very many cases in which the latter duty is a positive, and even a primary necessity. All that is meant is, that it is a mistake to suppose that by so doing a permanent hold upon their affections can be gained. No doubt, if she neglects them physically, she will lose their affections, but the reason will be because such neglect is sinful, and the children unconsciously feel that it is so, and, therefore, cease to respect her.

A mother's real hold upon her children is mental and moral; and when, without attempting to be her child's playfellow, she insists upon respectful obedience; when she exercises her gentle authority so as to assist the awakening conscience; when she satisfies the desire for information by instruction, and charms the vivid imagination by poetry and healthy fiction; above all, when she directs her little one's thoughts to God, and by leading it to pray, opens the door of communication between the visible and the invisible world, and gives an outlet for those yearnings after the Eternal and the Infinite, which lie hidden in the breast of a child, even as in that of a full-grown man, she is laying the foundation of a love which will last when physical needs have ceased; and which will be as much stronger and deeper than any affection based upon temporal necessity, as mind is

superior to matter ;—Eternity to time ;—Immortality to death.

Such love is the love of reverence. But it is of slow growth, or, rather, its growth is for some time imperceptible ; therefore, too often it does not satisfy a parent, and the love of companionship is accepted instead. And it demands self-control ; and maternal feelings are very difficult of control. It needs sound judgment ; and sound judgment is the result of thought and observation. Much more easy is it to give way to feelings as circumstances arise ; to be the child's playfellow one moment, and its impatient instructress the next ; to be a slave to the little one's wishes, when it happens to suit us, and to reprimand those wishes sharply when slavery happens not to suit us. We see the effect of such education amongst the lower orders. It requires no thought, no self-discipline : it is a kind of moral living from hand to mouth, which suits the poverty of our mental and spiritual endowments. The only misfortune is, that it must ultimately fail in attaining its end. The love produced by such a system will, like the seed sown upon stony ground, spring up quickly ; but because there is no deepness of earth—no foundation of reverence—it can have no root, and when the sun of life is up, and the scorching heat of selfishness and worldly temptations is felt, it will surely wither away.

There would seem to be little need to add the warning, that this enforcement of reverence must always be tempered by tenderness ; and yet some persons are not tender. They mean to be very good and kind to their children, but they have naturally

a cold, stiff mannér, and they cannot overcome it. And there are others who really do not thoroughly interest themselves in their little ones until they have ceased to be little. They think them troublesome, and put them aside in the nursery, supposing that in due time, without any effort of theirs, they will come forth, ready to be operated upon by some theory of perfect education. The first case is a misfortune, but, as it is nothing more, its effects will not be so permanently injurious. Children learn to read and understand coldness of manner, when it does not proceed from coldness of heart, and tenderness may be shown in many ways besides caresses or fondling words. But the second case is simply a sin, and it must expect sin's punishment. We may leave children to a nurse to be dressed, because it is probable that through life they must be more or less dependent for their bodily needs upon their inferiors in station; but if we leave them to her to be taught their little lessons, or guided in their prayers, we are abdicating the position of responsibility in which God has placed us; and as we have given up our duty, we must also give up our reward.

As a general rule, however, all persons are tender to babies and very little children: their helplessness awakens the feeling, and it is recognized as true, though there may be nothing like affection mixed with it. But there are two kinds of tenderness; one is the mere expression of natural instinct, the other, the result of earnestness of thought and purpose. It is the latter only which can leave a permanent impression. The first association of ideas which a child should have with its

mother should be that of being brought by her to think of God. With that thought there will arise, even in the mind of the little one who can only lisp its prayer, the sense of sin, whenever it has been naughty, and the entreaty for forgiveness; and with the assurance of forgiveness from the mother's lips there may be the expression of tenderness, deep, unspeakable—not the mere impulse of the moment, but that tenderness which will win the childish heart, and sink into its very being; and which will be read and understood unconsciously, through words, and looks, and tones, that to the careless observer may seem only to tell of respect and obedience. The child who associates the idea of its mother with its God, will reverence that mother even before it knows what reverence means; and one loving caress will then come with more power from her than a torrent of embraces from one who is but the minister to its little temper and fancies. Only let us have patience. Love is like every other of Heaven's natural gifts: it will bear fruit all the more richly because we give it time and opportunity to take root.

But we come now to sympathy—the second exhibition of the principle as apart from the impulse of love; and so much the more rare and difficult of attainment, as it requires self-restraint instead of self-indulgence; the control of impulse instead of the yielding to it. Tenderness, at least when shown to little children, is to most persons very easy, very pleasant. Sympathy, when exhibited towards youth, is difficult.

The dispensation of Christians is a dispensation of sympathy. The Divine nature was for a time

concealed, and Christ took upon Himself really our griefs and cares, and became one with us. This assertion scarcely requires to be exemplified. In the New Testament the fact meets us at every turn. Let us see, but in one or two instances especially, how, by means of this human sympathy, our Redeemer educated His disciples—those who were the nearest and dearest to Him—those who were to be the Teachers of the World—the patterns for all ages.

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”¹

“Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”²

“Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.”³

This is the exhibition of the sympathy of comprehension, a sympathy which can understand and appreciate the sorrows and the yearnings of others; and that, it must be remembered, at a time when the horror of coming agony and death might seem to render all such considerations impossible.

¹ St. John xiv. 1-3.

² St. Luke xxii. 28-30.

³ St. John xvii. 24.

"This is my Body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me."¹ "My Soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."² Here is the claim of reciprocal sympathy, and the exhibition of sinless human feeling which may be soothed by it.

It seems almost wrong to take these few instances as if they were all; whereas every act of our Blessed Lord was the expression of a sympathy personal and individual, as well as compassionate; but they may suffice to illustrate the two particular phases under which this virtue may be shown, and which, in our dealings with each other, and especially with young persons, we sometimes forget to distinguish.

The sympathy of comprehension requires that we should throw ourselves into the circumstances and position of other persons, so as to realize in our minds what they are at the moment thinking or feeling. This is more difficult in the case of children and young persons than in those of our own standing. Memory is not so great an assistance to us in this task as we might expect. As life goes on, our early years are mapped out in large divisions, and we can recall general impressions, but details of feelings are lost to us. And even if we are able to remember, we find that it is an effort to do so. When called upon to act we are too busy, too hurried, to pause and consider what would have been the effect of similar conduct on ourselves in former years. A

¹ St. Luke xxii. 19.

² St. Mark xiv. 34, 37, 38.

certain line or manner perhaps irritated us then ; or we were hardened instead of softened by reproaches ; or we were indignant when particular regulations were made ; or we felt ourselves unjustly treated by some special punishments. All this may have been true. But we say to ourselves, " we were young and foolish then ; we know better now. It would be impossible to make the fancies of youth a rule for the government of mature years." It may be impossible, or at anyrate it might be unwise, but certain it is, that if we cannot recall and do not carefully weigh these young and foolish fancies—if we cannot make allowance for them, and show our sympathy by consideration for them, even while perhaps we reprove and check them—we may enforce obedience upon our children or our pupils, but we shall never gain their love.

And so also with regard to imagination, longings, dreams, aspirations, morbid feelings, if we have forgotten that we ever had such ourselves,—if we can make no allowance for them,—if we avoid any mention of them, or turn from them with coldness or ridicule,—we shall, indeed, succeed in checking them,—that is, we shall shut them up,—and perhaps we shall think that we have crushed them ; but they will only be withdrawn from our view to be raised as a barrier between us and the heart which we are seeking to influence, and when we strive to enter that heart we shall find that its gates are closed against us.

Therefore it is that when the intellectual and moral faculties in children begin to develop themselves, so as to create definite needs, it becomes the duty of those who watch over them, to mark the form which

those needs take, and to direct their government accordingly. But this is difficult—much more difficult than to dress and undress a baby, or to play hide and seek with a child of three years old. We are apt to talk as if moral culture was a task of such engrossing interest that no one could be wearied with it. But let us try to act as well as to talk. Let us find ourselves worn in body and sorrowful in mind, forced to rouse all our energies, and listen to some tale of supposed hardship on the part of a child eleven or twelve years old ; let us endeavour to throw ourselves fully into her feelings, to give her advice, to speak gently when our nerves are strung to a pitch of irritability, to be patient when the conversation is occupying the only leisure moments we could seize for rest or recreation. We shall not find our duty so engrossingly delightful as we had been apt to imagine. And neither shall we be so satisfied with our own powers of sympathy as to find any great satisfaction in exercising them. They who are the most earnestly desirous of using this power as a means of moral influence, are the most conscious of failure in effecting their purpose. Their words may be sinking into the heart of the hearer, but to themselves they will often sound dead and ineffective. They may appear to give a full attention to the confession of weakness, or the desire for counsel ; yet they may be conscious in themselves of weariness and impatience. They may strive to be gentle and tender, but they will know their own imperfection of manner, and the very fear of repelling will increase what may be natural awkwardness. Above all things, they will desire to be true ; and weariness, and deadness, and distrac-

tion, will frequently check the feeling of affection, even when it really exists, and make them feel almost insincere when they attempt to show it. There is nothing delightful in all this.

To sympathize heartily, naturally, and constantly, a person must be thoroughly unselfish, and gifted with sound sense, exercised with tact and self-control. Need we wonder, then, that those who, acting upon the impulses of self-gratification, spoil their children of three years old; acting upon the same impulse, too often chill and repel their young daughter of thirteen. Such cases are very sad to watch,—sad both for parents and children as regards the present, and still more sad because the effects of such estrangement are so fatal for the future. If a mother fails to win the confidence of her child, that confidence will be given elsewhere. But confidence cannot exist without sympathy, and sympathy cannot exist without unselfishness. We come back to the same point again and again. The root of bad education is selfish love. People often forget that there is such a thing. Love presupposes, to most minds, a feeling in which self is forgotten in the happiness of the person loved. But it is not so. Love is perhaps more often selfish, and therefore more often self-deceiving, than any other passion of the human heart. Even a mother's love may be selfish; and when it is, selfishness will be its recompense.

It is not said that this reciprocal neglect is right or justifiable. The faults of a mother can never justify the disobedience of a child. If the subject now to be discussed were the duty of children and young persons, a different view might be taken of the whole

matter. But what is here said is addressed to parents, guardians, teachers, guides and instructors of the young generally; and they are earnestly entreated to consider whether absence of sympathy may not be at the root of that lamentable failure in education which too often drives those just entering upon life, and about to encounter its fiercest temptations, to seek aid and counsel from any persons except those whom God has pointed out as their safest and most natural protectors.

It is not difficult to gain the hearts of those who are entrusted to our care. A young mind—the mind of a girl especially—of eleven or twelve, of fifteen, sixteen, even seventeen or eighteen, is very impressible. The affections are strong, and very easily touched. Only show an interest in what interests them, and they will be found quite ready to open their hearts upon subjects of taste and amusement; and when the door of the heart is ever so little ajar, a kind word, or a little thoughtful act, will cause it to open still wider. A tone of sympathy in pain or disappointment will bring out the hidden sorrow; a reproof, given with encouragement instead of anger, will soften the proud spirit, and draw forth the penitent confession; and when once that point is reached the victory is all but won.

No, the difficulty is not with the children, but with ourselves. Young people will not trust us if we are not worthy to be trusted. They will not respect us if we are inconsistent. They will not love us if we are selfish and irritable. They will not listen to us when we bid them give their hearts to God, unless they see that we have first given Him our own.

But it may be said there are natural barriers, differences of temperament ; want of self-confidence on the one hand, shyness and reserve on the other.

It is very true. No one can venture to assert that in every case tenderness and sympathy will open the heart which we are longing to gain, and yet the exceptions must be rare, if we take sympathy in its largest sense, as including reciprocity as well as comprehension of feeling.

When our Blessed Redeemer bade His disciples not to be troubled in their heart, but look forward to the "many mansions" in His Father's House, He showed that He understood, and would fain comfort, their secret grief. When He said to His chosen disciples that His soul was "exceeding sorrowful," and bade them "tarry and watch," He confessed His own human, though sinless, infirmity, and sought for consolation in the sense of human sympathy.

And who could resist such an appeal ? Even looking to ourselves, are we not touched by the acknowledgment of suffering or anxiety on the part of one whom nature tells us to reverence and rest upon ? And if called upon to confess a weakness, are we not ready at once to accept the counsel, and to be influenced by the wishes of one who owns to have felt the power of a like temptation ?

There may be great natural reserve, shyness, or pride in the child, or the young girl whom we desire to direct aright, and for a long time the citadel of the heart may seem to hold out against us. We may even be unable to offer comprehensive sympathy, because we are ignorant of what is passing in the mind. But if we can break down our own barriers (a very

difficult undertaking with many people, and therefore never attempted)—and speak of the difficulties or troubles which we have felt ourselves—the case must be indeed rare in which reserve will hold out against us.

And parents have a special opportunity of practising this reciprocal sympathy. They have the same temporal interests as their children. Their joys, sorrows, hopes, and fears, must be fundamentally derived from the same source. And we may often have remarked as a fact, though we may never have inquired into its cause, that the strongest affection between a mother and a daughter will be found where there has been some great common subject of anxiety. In the case of poverty, or anything approaching to poverty, the joint exertions of the mother and her child will seem to create a tie much stronger than natural affection. Great anxiety for any absent member of the family will produce the same effect. Anything, indeed, which brings the interests of the mother within the comprehension of the child, will have a tendency to produce this strong feeling.

There is a great lesson to be learnt from this. Too many mothers make playthings of their little ones in the nursery, and then send them to the schoolroom to live a life apart under the care of the governess; and after a certain number of years suppose they will come forth musicians, artists, historians, linguists, and, as a matter of course, affectionate and sympathetic daughters. It is strange they do not see that, as regards information and accomplishments, they have sown the right seed, and

therefore may expect an answering harvest; but that, as regards the feeling towards themselves, they have sown no seed at all.

What the child needed was to be made to feel one with her mother. But she has had no opportunity. They have lived separate lives. The mother has had her cares, but she has never even hinted at them, much less given the least idea that her young daughter's sympathy could be a comfort to her. Perhaps, indeed, some of these cares have been such as could not be told, but there are many little ways of keeping up affectionate interest without touching upon sorrows which probably only God can comfort. A very little child may be made to feel that her mother is soothed by having her with her; and may learn to delight in being useful to her. The love thus awakened is much stronger than that which results from any efforts of the mother to amuse or interest. More especially is this the case as years go on, and thought deepens. Whenever it is possible to confide in a young girl, to give her a share, either in sorrow or in joy, something is done towards strengthening affection; for in youth there is an actual craving for this sense of usefulness, this feeling of being helpful to some one.

A mistake is often made here—a grievous and fatal one. Kind, good, unselfish parents, or friends, weary themselves for the young; they sacrifice their own wishes, tastes, pursuits; they exert themselves in illness; they rush from one scene of excitement and amusement to another, and all to make those whom they so dearly love happy. But they cannot succeed. They are chasing a phantom, and it flies

from them. The reality lies at their own door. Instead of making themselves useful to the young, if they would only make the young useful to them, they would be able to tell a very different tale. What these bright, gay, apparently thoughtless girls want is not amusement, but the feeling that they are necessary to the friends they live with, necessary in the sense of usefulness and sympathy, as well as affection.

Doubtless there are difficulties in the way of this mutual understanding in every-day worldly matters between the heads of a family and its young members.

But there are difficulties everywhere. In fleeing from one kind, we do but encounter others. We may not exactly know how to make a young girl useful in the house, but we may begin by talking to her of our own occupations. We may distrust her prudence in important matters, but we may tell her our little perplexities. We may think it in vain to consult her when we cannot reckon her opinion of value, but the very fact of asking what she thinks will win her interest.

And if we do not thus attach her to home by giving her home cares as well as home pursuits, we shall find that these natural cravings for usefulness, the sense of responsibility, and the exercise of the intellect in some practical form, will find a vent elsewhere. If the daughters of a family do not share their mother's interests, they will share those of some other person, and who that person may be is a very grave question, involving unforeseen dangers. Girls' friendships are no light matter, though they are often treated lightly. They are subjects for great caution, and must cause considerable anxiety: yet they need

never be feared so long as the daughter feels that the mother's cares are her cares—the mother's sorrows her sorrows.

For this is a tie more enduring than all others, because formed by God. He has moulded us into families, and though the members of those families may differ essentially in character, and be widely separated in the progress of life, yet, at the end, natural sympathy will be found to have survived all adventitious separations. No person is contented to die, away from his relations, though he may be surrounded by his friends, and those friends may be far more congenial to his taste. The mother will ultimately cling to her child, and the child to her mother, though, from faults of temper and mistakes in education, they may through life have jarred upon each other. But why should there be jars? Why should that holiest tie, which even the Lord of All vouchsafed to recognize, be ever loosened? Only let mothers meet their daughters, especially when advancing to womanhood, with sympathy, which shall be both comprehensive and reciprocal, and there will be little fear of reserve and estrangement.

Upon the subject of reciprocal sympathy, one more observation must, however, be made, which is applicable to all ages from childhood upwards.

To reprove is an essential part of the duty of parents, governors, teachers—all who have the care of others entrusted to them. But if reproof is ever to be effectual with the young, it must be the reproof which is softened by sympathy.

If we admonish, we must do it as those who have themselves felt the difficulty of obedience and self-

control. If we advise, it must be as those who have had practical experience of the necessity of advice. And we must not only feel this, but say it.

Is it not a truth? Let us look into our own hearts.

Do we not need God's forbearance, His long-suffering patience? Are our own faults so easily subdued? Are we so pure minded and simple, so attentive to our Lord's least wishes? Are we so grateful for all He has done for us? Are we so mindful of His warnings? Or rather does not conscience reproach us even by the very blame we cast upon others? Are there not times when we admonish severely, talk of self-discipline, and purity of heart, and sincerity of purpose; and, when the door is closed behind the child whose heart we have been striving to reach, find that we have cause to cast ourselves on our knees before our Maker, praying that He would pardon in us the very faults which we have been reproving, and grant to us, if it may be, even that same amount of simplicity and earnestness which we have the moment before pronounced to be so imperfect?

"We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."¹

That was the character of Him who is educating each one of us for heaven.

May God teach us to be like Him!

¹ Heb. iv. 15, 16.

CHAPTER VIII.

REPROOF.

THE consideration of the necessity of sympathy has already brought us to the subject of reproof, but much more remains to be said upon this point, for it is with regard to reproof that mothers and daughters, governesses and their pupils, are most frequently antagonistic.

And, "very naturally," it will be said; "no one likes to be reproofed." This is a broad assertion, the proof of which will perhaps be found upon examination to be somewhat wanting.

No one likes to be reproofed! That is, no one likes another mortal, erring like himself, to assume a position of authority to which he has no claim, and to reprimand without having a right to do so. This is the first natural dislike to reproof.

Neither does any one like to hear his offences pointed out and condemned coolly and contemptuously, or with passionate reproaches, or irritation, or fretfulness of manner or tone.

Indifference, contempt, irritability, fretfulness, can never be agreeable. But to dislike these things is not to dislike reproof, but the mode in which it is conveyed. As we attain that age so falsely called

the age of discretion, and pass beyond it, we do indeed become more impatient of reproof in any form; but that is chiefly because we are unfortunately losing our sense of reverence, for our fellow-creatures. Experience is beginning to show us their faults, and pride is whispering that our judgment and actions are as good as theirs, and therefore they have no right to interfere with us. Women are especially sensitive to anything like reproof, because, except from their husbands, they so very seldom receive it. And when a husband reproofs, the wife often considers herself at liberty to retaliate. The discipline which a man receives in his intercourse with the world;—the reprimand, for instance, which a junior officer must, if necessary, patiently receive from his superior; a barrister from a judge; or, in fact, any man in a position of inferiority from the person who is placed above him,—is for the most part unknown amongst educated women; and being thus untutored to submission, and consequently to reproof, they are proverbially difficult to govern.

But God did not make them so. A girl's nature is manageable. Her feelings are easily roused, her conscience is quickly worked upon; there is no stubborn hardness of heart which it is impossible to conquer. Instances may be brought forward as exceptions; but they must require greater proof than has ever yet been adduced, before they can be worthy of belief. Touch but the right spring, and we may venture to assert that there is no young girl who may not be brought to confess her faults, and not only to submit to reproof, but to be thankful for it.

But in order to this result, it must not be reproof

given for the sake of reproof, because the temper of the reprover is excited or his command neglected. There are occasions, indeed, in which this kind of reproof is instinctive, and therefore necessary and useful; but these are exceptional cases, referring to single exceptional acts. As Bishop Taylor says, "He who is angry with a servant's unwariness or inadvertency, or the remissness of a child's spirit and application to his studies, or on any sudden displeasure, is not guilty of prevaricating the sixth commandment, unless besides the object he add an inequality of degree, or unhandsome circumstances, or adjuncts. But since to reprove a sinning brother is, at the best, but an unwelcome and invidious employment, though it may also be understood to be full of charity, yet, therefore, we must not make it to be hateful by adding reproach, scorn, violent expressions, scurrility, derision, or bitter invectives."

God's government of the Israelites was, indeed, carried on by the means of sudden and stern rebuke; but in their condition of childhood this was requisite, in order to impress upon them some definite idea either of the Almighty's power, or their own duty. And in the government of very little children, we also shall find ourselves compelled to have recourse to a quick tone, and an instantaneous punishment, for this is the only reproof which at that age can be understood. As the fault is one of act rather than of principle, so the reproof must be of like kind. But children verging upon youth require to have ideas recalled rather than impressed upon them, and anything like impatience or irritability in their case will be met by a feeling of resentment. We do indeed

find, when examining our Lord's method of dealing with His disciples, that there were times when His censures were severe, sudden, and unsparing; but such censures were always either addressed generally, so that their severity was softened to the individual; or they were spoken to one for the benefit of many; and human nature is so constituted that, in the presence of others, we can better bear a few severe words than a lengthened appeal to our personal feelings. A young girl will submit to a stern rebuke before her companions; but she will writhe and wince, and at length shut herself up in sullenness, under a long lecture.

In illustration of what has been said, we may remark the mode in which our Saviour, as He was journeying to Jerusalem, addressed St. James and St. John, who desired to bring down fire from Heaven to consume the Samaritans. He turned and rebuked them, and said: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." That was a special reproof, but though severe, it was quick, and uttered for the instruction of many.

So, again, under similar circumstances, He could say to St. Peter in the presence of the disciples, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men;" but when, after the Apostle's fall, his heart was to be touched, so that it never should turn aside again,—as Bishop Taylor reminds us, "our dearest Lord looked upon him when the sign was given with the crowing of the cock, and chid him into a shower of penitential tears." Yes, that is the true, the safe

example of reproof, which shall be received humbly, and be remembered permanently. It must appeal to the affections.

With the mother this may be presumed to be natural and easy. With the governess, it must require time, yet not necessarily any length of time. Those who have the care of the young will scarcely be disappointed if they calculate that a few weeks of firmness, justice, tenderness, and sympathy, will have so worked upon the heart as to make it open to kind reproof; and very thankful for helpful advice. It is even strange to watch how quickly a child's feelings may, through God's grace, be so touched as to prepare the way for the reception of the good seed. But it is unwise to attempt grave reproof until the ground is thus softened. To be blind for a time is wise, and very necessary, for if we begin to reprove too soon the heart will only become harder.

And when at length we see that the fitting moment is come, we shall at first often obtain our end more successfully if we use rather indirect means. The only reproof which our Lord gave in words to St. Peter, after the grievous denial, which might have been thought to have lessened His love, was indirect, and couched in the form of a question: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

And a young girl whose pride will rebel at the direct assertion, from a comparative stranger: "You were guilty of such a fault," will respond very meekly to the question, "Would it not have been better if you had done otherwise?"

This may seem to some persons almost an insincere mode of treatment. It may appear to be ignoring

facts, or at least to be taking too lenient a view of them. The faults of the young are sins, and sin under any shape is *sinful*; and both in the Old Testament and the New is denounced unsparingly.

It is true. Sin is thus denounced; and, God forbid, that in speaking of it to young or old, to others or ourselves, we should ever deal with it differently from the Word of God! But if God hates sin, He loves the sinner. If it were not so, what hope would any one of us have of salvation? The same Saviour who, through the mouth of His Apostle, enumerated the works of the flesh; and has told us plainly that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,"¹ answered the accusation of the Pharisees against the woman taken in adultery, with the words, "Neither do I condemn thee—go and sin no more."

No words can be too strong to express the danger of indulged sin, for there is a voice in the secret heart which echoes their truth, but such warnings must be given at the right time and in the right way. When we have won the heart, we may say what we will of certain faults, and of the importance of conquering these, so long as we express what we really feel. If we only talk, as a matter of course, because we consider it to be a part of our business, we shall do better to be silent. Yet more, we may not only speak against these faults generally, but we may descend to details, and apply them to the individual; we may say, for instance, in plain words: "you were vain, on such an occasion, selfish, passionate, proud,

¹ Gal. v. 21.

self-willed," conceited, or whatever the special fault may have been, and we shall find that after the first feeling of annoyance has passed, our words will be received thankfully. It is better, indeed, to be definite than general. A vague reproof calls up a spirit of self-justification and irritability, and is sometimes very disheartening; as, for instance, when a young girl is told "you are so affected," or "so awkward," and is left to find out for herself in what particular way the affectation or awkwardness exhibits itself. But in all cases, if we desire reproof to be well taken, there must be an unmistakable, simple, earnest interest in the welfare of the person we are addressing; and the consistency of our own conduct, the rigidity of our own self-discipline, must have shown that, however, strict and unsparing we may be with others, we are much more so with ourselves. When this is the case, we may express ourselves as strongly as we think right, and so far from awakening resentment, we shall increase affection.

But we shall find also that this plainness of speech is more willingly endured when introduced gradually, in the course of a private general conversation, than when it is used in the form of a lecture from a superior to an inferior. There is a ground upon which we may all meet in common. Old and young, parent and child, governess and pupil, are all at school, all training for a future life. In administering a lecture we seem to put this truth aside. We unconsciously speak as if we stood on higher ground, apart from the temptations which are in reality common. The heart closes up then, and we cannot enter. If, however, we can descend from

this position of superiority, and fairly recognize the fact that in spite of external differences we are really one; if we are able to draw out the half-spoken confession, to suggest the motives and feelings, which, it may be, the child herself only half understands; if we can say, "I know that when I was your age, I had such and such feelings, or acted in such and such a way," we give a sense of relief, of freedom to the burdened and wounded spirit; and the very plainness of our language becomes a soothing comfort.

To be known—understood; is it not what we all crave? Is it not often the root of a morbid desire for confession to men? Is it not the source of the unutterable rest which we feel in our confessions to God? We ask the friends who are dear to us as our own souls, to love us, though they know our faults, and as we repeat the words we feel that they are vain. No one knows us. No one can tell the history of our inner lives. No one can see our secret impulses, our unworthy motives, our base self-deceit, our meanness and impurity in thought and feeling; and no one can recall the tale of those past transgressions, the guilt of which is blotted out, we trust, for Christ's sake; but the memory of which must one day face us before God's judgment seat.

We are not known, we cannot be known. As we advance on our lonely path, the conviction deepens day by day. We must bear with it—it is our trial, and our punishment. And so much the more as we strive to be true with ourselves, so much the more will the pain of in any way deceiving others, even though involuntarily, by appearing to be what we are not, become acute.

To tell what ^{we} are, and what we have been ; to face the sorrow, the disappointment, perhaps the scorn and contempt, with the support of that one thought, at least I am no longer untrue ; that is the yearning of the heart ^{which} has looked calmly in the face the contrast between its secret sins, and its profession of holiness. For this yearning there is no remedy, but to accept the approbation of men as our penance, and to turn from it to that Omniscient yet all Merciful Redeemer, " who knows all, yet loves us better than He knows."

But the young have these feelings only in their germ. They are conscious of having faults, but they cannot discriminate between them. They have impulses and motives which their moral sense teaches them are wrong, but they view them confusedly. They cannot classify them so as to understand how to deal with them ; and when they attempt to speak of them, they confound natural and innocent feelings with the exaggerations which render them sinful. Not understanding themselves, they have a sense of self-dissatisfaction—a kind of self-suspicion, which destroys their peace, though it may not be an actual burden upon their hearts. The voice which tells them what it is which causes these uneasy feelings, is, therefore, a voice of comfort. To be saved the pain of explanation, and the attempt to confess what is not thoroughly understood, is a great boon. At the first shock, indeed, there is a natural revulsion, but it quickly passes, and the relief of being thoroughly known, or of believing they are so, and yet loved and cared for, ^{makes} amends for any momentary suffering. They feel, as

it were, set at liberty, able to speak, and ask advice, without restraint, and they are assisted in the confession of their difficulties by the light poured in upon their hearts, showing them from whence those difficulties came.

And severe truths are also moral tonics, and we must all, more or less, acknowledge their strengthening power. There are occasions, indeed, in which what would otherwise be an injudicious dose may be administered with great effect.

Conceit is one of the few faults which may be reproved with an amount of plainness of speech inadmissible in most other cases. It is the result of moral or mental blindness. A veil hangs before the eyes, which prevents the truth from being seen; and though it may be removed roughly, the effect will be good.

Irony, also, is a species of reproof, which is sometimes efficacious, but it must be used with extreme caution. When applied to the correction of grave offences, it becomes satire, and is a censure so severe as only to be applicable to those rare cases in which a righteous indignation justifiably takes the place of sympathy.

When Ahab summoned Micaiah to his presence, and bade him tell whether the siege of Ramoth-Gilead could be undertaken with the hope of a blessing upon its result, the ironical answer, "Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king," was felt instantly as a contemptuous reproof of the question, which Ahab's own conscience might have answered; and the king answered angrily, "How many times shall I adjure thee that

thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord?"¹

In this case there was no admixture of sympathy; there was, in fact, no opening for it. The guilty monarch, upon whom the long-suffering of God had had no effect, was beyond the reach of that loving reproof which leads to repentance and amendment. He might be startled by indignation, but he could not be won by tenderness.

And when this point is reached in the history of any individual entrusted to our charge, we shall do well to consider whether the task of education may not better be entrusted to another.

Satire, employed for the purpose of rebuking serious offences, implies deep-seated contempt; and the exhibition of this feeling is so antagonistic to love and sympathy, it creates so deep a wound, that when it has once been used, it is next to impossible to touch the gentler feelings, and so to win the heart. It is, in fact, not so much a reproof as a judicial punishment. We may deem it right to inflict it, but when we have done so, we must be prepared for alienation of the heart from ourselves as its result.

But there is a light satire, free from all bitterness, and appealing to the sense of the ridiculous in the person addressed, which is useful as well as justifiable, in those cases in which the fault attacked does not, upon the surface, appear a sin, but only an excusable yielding to custom, human infirmity, or some generally admitted maxim of the world.

¹ 1 Kings xxii. 15, 16.

There is no fault, indeed, which is not, strictly speaking, a sin; no weakness, or folly, which is not, in some degree, sinful; and nothing is more difficult than to attempt to draw a strict line between follies and sins. But to refuse to recognize the distinction is simply to repeat the mistake of Draco when he endeavoured to punish all offences equally, and ended by punishing none. We shall often find, also, that in speaking gravely of follies which have custom or sophistry to support them, we raise up a host of excuses and counter arguments, which we are unable, at the moment, to combat; and which will effectually bar the way against the deeper reasoning by which we know that, upon consideration, we should be able to support our own view.

Instances of petty exclusiveness, absurd following of fashion in dress, affectation and pretence, may all be classed under the category of folly, and all are open to an ironical reproof. Not that such reproof will be instantly effective. It will, indeed, most likely be rejected at the moment, and the individual attacked, by it may retreat without having apparently yielded, but it will not be forgotten, neither will it willingly be encountered again. And to be ashamed of these things is a great point gained towards their uprooting. We must often have met with persons really Christian in feeling, and anxious to do right, who are victims to some of the follies above alluded to; and we may have wondered how it was that such aberrations of principle and taste should exist in connection with good sense and good feeling upon other points. What has been wanting in the formation of these characters has, most likely, been a little

good-natured irony in youth. Lectures upon worldliness may probably have been given, but the words have been too serious for the examples to which they were to be applied, and so have failed to make an impression. A grave-discourse upon the vanity and selfishness of some peculiar kind of dress, or a sermon upon pride, applied to the customary etiquettes of precedence in fashionable society, strikes the hearer with a sense of the ludicrous. Yet the grave discourse may have a foundation in truth; and there is no doubt that the assertion of precedence is often associated with pride. It requires, however, thought and reasoning power to discover the sin which is hidden under such folly; and young people think and reason but little, and so they do not pay attention to what is said, for they consider it exaggerated. If folly can be knocked on the head by good-humoured irony, even before principle has time to exert itself, a great deal of apparent inconsistency will be avoided. It cannot, however, be too carefully borne in mind, that this method of rebuke, when used by a superior to an inferior, can never be safely exercised, except where there is a strong feeling of affection on the one side, and of respect on the other. Where anything like coldness or distrust exists, it is fatal to real influence. The arrows of satire, and even of irony, are always, more or less, steeped in poison, and in aiming at the fault, the greatest care is needed, lest we should miss the mark, and only inflict a deadly wound upon charity. Another mistake in reproving lesser defects is one which has been alluded to before, that of generalizing. A child is told, "You are so affected, or so stupid,"

or "so blundering;" and the mind is cast down by a vague sense of faultiness, which clouds it all over, like a mist on a November day. No special instance of the fault has been given, and, therefore, no special effort can be made to overcome it. But tell her that she drawls her words, or puts her head to one side, and she knows what she has to watch against. Show her that she does not take care to move things out of her way, and, in consequence, knocks them down, and she can improve. These defects are, indeed, only symptoms, and, no doubt, the root of the disease is that which we really have to guard against; but it is, unfortunately, the case with defects of manner, that, from habit, they remain, and entail painful consequences, even when the wrong principle, which was their root, has been, in a great measure, eradicated. An affected girl will, most likely, be an apparently affected woman; an awkward girl, an awkward woman; and the harsh-judging world will condemn what it dislikes, and will never take the trouble to inquire from what source the defect springs. Untidy dress is, also, a most fertile subject for these lighter kinds of reproof; in fact, many of the jars of family life, in the nursery and school-room, arise from it. Some children have a kind of talent for dress. Everything they put on fits them. With others it is just the reverse. Yet it is common to treat the latter case as if it arose from a moral fault. Children are scolded as if they were really bent upon looking their worst; and yet, perhaps, they have spent double the time that others have in endeavouring to make themselves appear as their friends wish. There is no want of will, but there is

an actual want of power. They are near-sighted, and do not see what is amiss, or they cannot use their fingers rapidly and well. They want careful, patient teaching; instead of it, they get irritable reproof; and the consequence is, that they grow nervous, and dress just as badly as before, and will probably continue to do so all their lives, to their own great annoyance and that of their friends. Real untidiness from carelessness is quite a different thing; but even here, we shall find that it is no use to give a lecture upon it as if it was a mortal sin. Children do not feel that it is so, and they will never accept what they consider an exaggerated censure. They will own that their conduct is naughty, vexatious, tiresome, but it is no use to call it sinful, for they cannot perceive its sinfulness. Constant small penalties, exacted according to definite rules, and, therefore, having the effect of natural laws, will, in this case, be more efficacious, and certainly less fretting than lectures. Unpleasant, awkward tricks, also, must, no doubt, be reproved, and that very sharply; but, as in the case of carelessness, we can never make a young girl own that it is sinful to be constantly putting her hand to her mouth, or resting upon one foot. What is required in these cases is patience and temper. No doubt it is most wearisome to be always recalling the attention to the same thing. It must give cause to suppose that no effort is made to improve; and yet, very likely, there is a real effort, only habit is so strong. We might, perhaps, under such a trial strengthen our patience by thinking of our own habits in God's sight. How many things

there are which He has all our lives been warning us not to do, and yet which we still persist in doing! And we might help the child we are educating by showing why these apparently slight things are of such importance. Tricks are like little tormenting insects constantly buzzing about us. We try to overlook them, but they will thrust themselves before us; and when the annoyance is felt every day, and all day long, it becomes almost unbearable. Even a very strong affection will scarcely stand the ordeal of a perpetual disagreeable, or even a merely fidgety trick. Say this to a child, and she will recognize the necessity of watchfulness, and endeavour to correct her bad habits; but without such explanation, the moral virtue of standing straight, and keeping her fingers quiet, is beyond her comprehension; and although she certainly ought to strive to do what she is told, as a matter of obedience, yet, after all, human independence is strong, and human beings, even children, will ask, "Why?" when they find that great stress is laid upon seeming trifles.

Unpunctuality, again, is a most vexatious fault, which must be constantly noticed, because of its fatal consequences, and which yet can scarcely be called a sin. Practical reproof is desirable in this case. If a child cannot be ready in time for a walk, she may be left behind. If she is not dressed for a party, she may stay at home. If she cannot get up in the morning, so as to appear at the breakfast table, she may be compelled to lie in bed. This kind of reproof is but forestalling the discipline of society, which punishes unpunctuality most effectually; and if deliberately

carried out it will probably have some effect, though not all that we hope or imagine; for persons often reach middle life before they open their eyes to the moral evil of unpunctuality. To these practical remedies may be added, from time to time, an earnest appeal to a child's right feeling and good sense. She may be made to see the consequences of unpunctuality, and so her better principles may be roused to make a strenuous effort against it. To this may be added with great effect one definite rule: to take first that which *must* be done; and afterwards that which *may* be done. If it is a question between writing a note, and preparing to join a party for a walk at a certain hour—dress for the walk first, and write the note afterwards. If it is necessary to be ready for an early journey, let the carpet-bag be packed, and then sit down to read. It is but a simple rule, but if it can once be thoroughly rooted in the mind, it will be the means of avoiding innumerable trials of temper. And in this, as in so many other cases, what young people want is to be shown how they may do right, to have something distinct, marked, put before them. Every one feels personally the annoyance of unpunctuality. The delinquents are nearly as much provoked with themselves as their friends are with them; but every time the temptation arises some excuse presents itself, and without a definite rule by which to guide themselves they almost inevitably give way to it.

One more remark may be made upon the subject of reproof, addressed to those who cannot bring themselves to reprove at all. This is not a very uncommon case with mothers, and to them nothing can

be said except that they are abdicating a solemn duty, and that upon no sin does the punishment of God more surely follow. As it was in the days of Eli, so it is now. Because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not, therefore God swore unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house should not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.¹

And yet Eli expostulated, which is more than many persons can bring themselves to do ; but because he was not zealous for God's honour, therefore the curse fell upon him.

And is not this sin of parents more or less the temptation of all who are called upon to educate ? We speak when we are angry, we reprove when our attention is particularly drawn to any special fault, but indolence interferes with our quickness in perceiving what is wrong, and want of moral courage prevents us from rebuking it when we do perceive it.

The father continually puts off the unpleasant task of reproving upon the mother, and the mother is very glad to devolve it upon the governess, who, perhaps, doubting the extent of her own influence, thinks it better not to attempt it.

It is easy to scold a little child, but it is by no means so easy to find fault with a girl of fifteen or sixteen, and excuses for not doing so are always ready. "It will do more harm than good ; it will only irritate. Girls of that age are wilful, and very jealous of interference." These things are easily said, and readily believed by a self-deceiving heart. And moral

¹ 1 Sam. iii. 13, 14.

cowardice is so common, and conceals itself under so many garbs, that we scarcely recognize it as being wrong.

But if we have not learnt how to give pain when necessary, if we cannot bring ourselves to utter an unpleasant truth, we may as well relinquish the task of education altogether; it may almost be said we may as well relinquish the attempt to do good under any form.

Truth is the foundation of respect, and unless we have the respect of the young, we shall never have their love. There are things most unpleasant to be said, for which there seems no fitting opportunity, which are repugnant to our taste or our reserve; but if it is right to say them, they must be said; and if we do not say them, we are educating upon a falsity, and we shall hereafter reap the consequence. The most humiliating rebuke which can be uttered is more palatable to the young mind than the tenderest sympathy of language or manner, when it is felt that beneath this tenderness there is a shrinking from expressing what is really thought.

Truth, as the basis of reproof—truth, uttered gently, softened by sympathy, but pure and unalloyed! It is the burden which God lays upon every individual soul to which he has entrusted the charge of another. We may flee from our duty as Jonah fled from preaching to the Ninevites, but punishment will assuredly overtake us as it did the prophet; not perhaps now, in the busy rush of the world, but in those lonely hours when our work is well-nigh done, and we fold our hands wearily and look back upon the past, and trace

the separate courses of the young lives which we have been permitted to influence, and compare what they have been with what they might have been, if we had only had the courage to reprove when we were bound to reprove, to warn when the heart was open to warning.

CHAPTER IX.

FORGIVENESS. •

AFTER reproof comes forgiveness, a subject upon which there would seem but little to be said. Forgiveness, it may be thought, is pardon, the putting away and forgetting the offence. And yet when we come to inquire, we shall find that this is not always the idea formed of it.

A little child is forgiven ~~and~~ readily. It throws its arms around its mother's neck, and she wipes away its tears, and covers it with caresses, and the next moment the mouth is bright with smiles, and the voice is ringing with laughter. But it is not so at a more advanced age. Forgiveness in the mind of a young girl of thirteen or fourteen is often associated with the idea of a homily upon the offence which has been committed, with the addition, perhaps, of a warning against other faults, more or less connected with it. This is by no means an encouraging prospect to a child—proud, probably, and resentful, conscious of having been in the wrong, yet seeing many excuses for herself, and battling by the aid of a will, as yet only half converted to the right, against the strong temptation to stand up for her own cause.

But let us look at some instances of rebuke and

forgiveness in the Bible. There is one which will present itself at once to us all; that of Nathan and David. The tale by which the prophet strove to open the eyes of the self-deceived monarch to the extent of his iniquity, was the most cutting reproof that the tongue of man could administer; and when it failed in its effect, the words, "Thou art the man," were like the arrow aimed at the heart which, it might have been thought, would have destroyed, rather than re-awakened its spiritual life.

A hardened sinner would have been more hardened by it; but David was not hardened, and Nathan knew it; and when there is any tenderness in the conscience, it will respond to truth before all things. The prophet followed up the bold assertion, with a yet more bold enumeration of the sins which had been committed, and the punishments which were to follow. "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."¹

We hear no more of reproof, nothing even of warning, or exhortation. There is, indeed, the declaration that God would, for the sake of others, inflict on David a sorrow which all should know and understand; but, then, "Nathan departed unto his house."

We will turn to other examples of forgiveness in the New Testament. "A woman which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of oint-

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 13.

ment, and stood at His Feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His Feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His Feet, and anointed them with the ointment.”¹ It was the silent confession of her guilt—the silent entreaty for pardon. Our Lord took occasion from her conduct to reprove the Pharisee in words which, if his proud self-righteousness had not so fenced his heart as to render it impenetrable, must have touched him to the quick. To the woman He only said, “Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”²

That was no solitary case. Have we not all marvelled at the perfect, the free, the unexpected pardon of the woman taken in adultery? Have we not all read the parable of the Prodigal Son, with somewhat of a sense of astonishment, that the very first movement of repentance should be received, and the sin apparently overlooked, as if it had never been committed?

God's ways are not as our ways: His thoughts are not as our thoughts. We think that the time of confession and forgiveness is the time for warning and counsel. He knows that it is not so. He sees how sensitive the wounded spirit is at such a moment; how quickly it catches the least tone of lingering anger, and how soon the barely subdued pride rises again. He knows that the heart wants confidence, that it can scarcely at first believe in the fact of forgiveness, and so He gives it rest, that it may learn to understand its new position.

¹ St. Luke, vii. 37, 38.

² St. Luke, vii. 48, 50.

If we forgive, and if we mean our forgiveness to be effective, as was that of our Redeemer, it must stand complete, and alone. When the words, "I am sorry" are spoken, and we know that they are not words of course, we must give an instant, hearty pardon, and let the past fault be buried, until, with the full consent and wish of the offender, it is brought out again to be examined, so that it may be guarded against more carefully for the future.

We may sometimes, especially in cases of deception, have tried the plan of half forgiveness. We may have received a child's confession, and had what is called, a serious talk, upon the offence, and we may have ended with saying, "I forgive, but you must remember I cannot look upon you as I did before; you have no right to expect it." And the answer will probably be a murmur of sorrowful acquiescence. And upon this species of agreement we may have separated. But we shall find that we cannot keep to it. There is no such thing as half forgiveness. Pardon is like truth. It is one, indivisible. A half truth is a whole falsehood. A half forgiveness is a whole enmity and punishment. We shall feel it ourselves, and the child will feel it also. We shall be restless under it, and a further explanation must speedily follow; at least, when there is a real desire for mutual good understanding—for improvement on the one side, and sympathy on the other. There are, indeed, many cases in which acknowledgment of error is superficial; there is no real sense of wrong, and the words of contrition are mere words of course. But even then, it is better to say at once, "I cannot thoroughly

forgive, I do not trust you," than to use the sacred words of pardon with anything like a double meaning. It will have more effect upon the child's mind. If she has been told that she is forgiven, she will feel herself justified in putting the offence away from her memory; but as long as she knows herself to be unforgiven, the fault will burden her conscience, and she may possibly feel compelled to exert herself to get rid of it by amendment and sincerity of purpose. This retaining of anger is, however, a very doubtful measure. It can only be safely resorted to after long experience of unreality and carelessness. God's method of pardon is surely our safest example. "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me? because he humbleth himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house."¹

And yet God at that very moment knew that Ahab would die in battle unrepentant and under a curse.

But it may be said, this full pardon, where repentance is doubtful, will encourage indifference to transgression. If a child is perfectly sure that she will be forgiven as soon and as often as she owns her fault, she will become careless as to committing it. This would, no doubt, be true, if forgiveness and escape from punishment were one and the same thing. But we do not find that they are so in God's moral government, either in nature or revelation. The spendthrift owns his sin, and through the Atonement of Christ it is blotted out as if it had never been; but he does not therefore escape the punishment of poverty. When Nathan pronounced

¹ 1 Kings xxi. 29.

the pardon of David, he did not therefore revoke the sentence of family misery, which was to be his curse for the remainder of his life; and because a public sin required a public retribution, further punishment was added. "Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."¹

Now, if we look into these punishments, we shall see that the first were what may be termed natural; that is, following in the natural course of events, as cause and effect; whilst the second was judicial, that is to say, a special suffering was inflicted for a special sin.

That the first punishments were natural will be evident to any person who studies the sequence of events which followed David's fall; the respect of his people lost, and the way thus opened for Absalom's conspiracy; that conspiracy, strengthened by the assistance of Ahithophel (the grandfather of Bathsheba), by whose direct counsel the punishment prophesied by Nathan was carried into effect, and—perhaps the most striking natural punishment of all—when Absalom's rebellion was crushed, the miserable subjection of the repentant monarch to the imperious will of Joab, his confidant and the instrument of Uriah's murder.²

As these events followed each other, David's memory, and David's heart, must have recognized in

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 14.

² The whole of this argument, as to the consequences of David's sin, is taken from Professor Blunt's "Scriptural Coincidences." Part II. chap. xi.

them those seemingly inevitable consequences of human action, which take from them the idea of their being instances of God's present wrath, and suffer the conscience still to find repose in the thought of being forgiven. God had pardoned, but He would not interpose to alter the fixed laws by which one event succeeds another, and therefore David suffered. He was, at it were, his own executioner. But in the case of the death of the little infant, it was different. There was no fixed law, at least none which the human mind could recognize, according to which the child must die. The affliction appeared in the light of a direct punishment from God, and therefore, as it would seem, the severity of its announcement was tempered by a merciful explanation of the reason for which it was sent.

David was forgiven. He was to look upon God as his merciful and loving Father, and although a special judicial punishment was to be borne, it was to be for the sake of others, and not for his own. He was repentant already; he needed nothing to make him more so. He might have been set free, and no distinct punishment exacted; but "because the enemies of God might blaspheme," when they saw an instance of, what might be called, prosperous guilt in the case of a king who professed to be God's servant, therefore his child must die.

The distinction between the two kinds of punishment inflicted upon David will perhaps give us some clue as to the mode in which the difficult but often necessary task of combining punishment with forgiveness, may be carried out in education.

We have already spoken of natural punishment,

that is to say, fixed rules according to which certain penalties are affixed to certain actions. These are analogous to the natural laws, according to which the moral government of the world is directed; and, as in the instance of the Jewish monarch, there is no call upon us to interpose so as to prevent their being carried into effect against an offender, although forgiveness may have been complete, without even a memory of the past remaining. No one who is really penitent ever expects or even wishes for such an interposition, and therefore to say, "I forgive, but you must still submit to the punishment you have incurred," excites no resentment, and raises no doubt as to the sincerity of the pardon. But if we feel it necessary to inflict any extra punishment, we must give our full reason, and we must be careful that this reason shall be such as will carry with it the accordance of the person who is to suffer.

David, indeed, prayed for the remission of the sentence passed upon him. The feelings of the parent were too strong to admit of his acquiescing without an entreaty that his child might be spared to him; but when he knew that the decree was irrevocable, the fact did not lessen his consciousness that God's favour was restored to him. He could still say, humbly and trustingly, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit:" and with that recognition for God's outraged honour, which was the reason given for the infliction of his own chastisement, he could add; "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation * and my tongue

shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips ; and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise."¹

And this same perfect acquiescence in punishment, when used as a means to correct a fault, or for the sake of warning to others, will be found in children. They will see instantly that such punishment has no unkindness in it, for their recognition of what is right and just, and in accordance with reason and common sense, is clearer than that of the generality of persons more advanced in age.

If they rebel against what is demanded of them, from passion or resentment, they do not attempt to disguise the fact. Let any one watch the sophistries of his own heart, or observe those which reach him every day from the false reasonings of men, and contrast them with the simple free acknowledgment of sin, and acceptance of sin's consequence from the lips of a child of twelve or thirteen, who is really sorry for having done wrong, and really anxious to do right, and he will at once own that the intellect of the head and the intellect of the heart (if such an expression may be admitted) by no means correspond. The child perceives at once the truth which the man or the woman sees, only indistinctly, through a mist of proud and sophistical argument. We, too often confuse the idea of suffering with that of atonement, and suppose that by suffering, we in some way make amends for our sin. The child sees the distinction between the two, and accepts forgiveness as a free gift, and punishment, when justly in-

¹ Psalm li. 12-15.

flicted, as the inevitable result of its own misconduct, or as the needful warning for others. Children are wilful and unreasoning, but we shall often find that they, in their simplicity, are nearer to God than we in the strength of our human reason. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

We look upon these words as allegorical. It may be that we should be more successful in the task of education if we accepted them literally; if, whilst educating the young, we also educated ourselves; confessing even as a child confesses; receiving forgiveness, even as a child receives it; and acknowledging the necessity of chastisement, even as a child acknowledges it, when it receives and returns the kiss of pardon, and then leaves us to bear the penalty of its fault, with a brave heart, and a loving spirit, which converts the chastisement for sin into the blessed instrument of restoration and amendment.

CHAPTER X.

ADVICE.

It has been implied in what has previously been said, that anything like a repetition of reproof should never accompany forgiveness; but advice is not reproof, and it will very often happen that, after forgiveness, advice will be both needed and requested. The mode in which it may best be offered is a very important subject for consideration; but before we reach this point, we must inquire into the nature of the materials with which and upon which we are required to operate.

Evil, we must always bear in mind, is not a distinct principle in itself, but a perversion of good. That this is so will be evident, when we bring before ourselves the doctrine involved in the contrary statement. If evil is a principle in itself, then it must either be distinct from God, in which case it would be eternal, self-existing, and we should arrive at the Manichæan idea of two deities—one good, and the other evil; or it must have been created by God, in which case it would belong to the Nature of God, and He would cease to be good.

Both these doctrines will at once be rejected with abhorrence; but if rejected, we must accept the only

other alternative, and admit that evil is distorted or exaggerated good.

We recognize this truth, indeed, in the very words which we use in speaking of evil. We say that man's nature is fallen—that is, its proportions have been destroyed, but the fragments of which it was composed remain. We say this is a ruined world; that is, a world the order of which has been disturbed, although the materials with which it was built are still visible. The analogy holds good in other cases. The ingredients of medicine and poison are the same, the natural difference existing between them is a difference of proportion. Fire and water are in their elementary properties alike, whether they nourish or destroy.

But it must not be supposed that the magnitude of evil is lessened by the fact that, instead of being a principle in itself, it exists only in the form of distorted good. On the contrary, it is increased. That all good things become the worst in their perversion is a proverb. God teaches us this in nature, by the instances already brought forward, namely, the destructiveness of the very elements which, when used in their right proportion, are indispensable to man's life and health; and He teaches it also in morals, by the facts which are continually brought before us in our dealings with each other. The most cruel of all creatures is a cruel woman, because by nature she is the most gentle and merciful. The most fierce of all wars is a religious war, because the principle of religion is in its nature the principle of peace.

But if the elements of man's nature require only reconstruction, it would seem that the task is in

our own power. The Bible, however, tells us differently. It speaks of regeneration—renewal. It warns us that without the infusion of a new Spirit, the Image of God—that Image in which man was created—can never be restored.

This statement can also, in a measure, be verified by analogy. We cut a branch from a tree, and, left in that state, it will die. We graft it into another, and the living sap circulates in it again, and it lives: the great distinction in this case between natural and spiritual revivification being, that in the former case, even whilst separated from the source of life, the principle of life is still existing in the branch, though it must sooner or later die; whilst in the latter, life is entirely lost, and can only be recovered by actual regeneration.

But, though the nature of man is indeed fallen and ruined, and only the indwelling Spirit of God, and the principle of love to God, can really restore it to its pristine form, it must not be thought that we have nothing to do as regards arranging and preparing the elements of which it is composed. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you,"¹ is a command as applicable to education as to self-discipline. God alone can make the children we love holy, but we can assist in removing the obstacles to holiness; and having this object in view, we must examine well the materials of character which come under our influence, and endeavour so to correct and arrange them that we may not, in striving to destroy

¹ Philip. ii. 12, 13.

a fault, overlook the virtue of which it is the indication.

An impulsive, rash, self-confident character is also active and energetic. A selfish, over-careful disposition contains the germs of prudence. An indolent character is usually gentle, and unwilling to accept provocation. A jealous temper is an affectionate one. An irritable temper is sensitive, quick in perception. Vanity is the exaggeration of an amiable desire to please. And the reason why so much good advice, or advice which is meant to be good, is received so badly by those to whom it is offered, very often is, that in touching the fault, the virtue is touched also; and then the natural instinct of self-defence exhibits itself in the form of an excuse.

Now, if we wish to give advice which will be palatable as well as true, we must show sympathy with whatever is natural and innocent in the feeling which has been aroused, before we give a caution against exaggeration. A child we will suppose requires advice as to the control of its temper, a warning upon the sin of giving way to passion, and the frightful consequences which may result from it. Let us begin with sympathy. "Life in all its forms is very trying—our fellow-creatures are doubtless very provoking, and passion comes upon us suddenly: we are not all born with that quiet temperament which can patiently submit to injury, real or imaginary, and, if we were, many evils would be tolerated which now are overcome. But passion is sinful, there is no doubt upon that point; and as passionate persons have naturally more energy than those who are by nature meek, so they have greater power of self-control, if

they only choose to exercise it. The spirit which urges us to compel another to yield to us our right, may also be exercised in compelling ourselves to give way. We must do battle with something; then let it be with our own evil temper: let us, through God's help, master that." When the better feelings have thus been appealed to, more definite advice for special occasions may be given, with every hope of its being well received. So, again, with vanity. It is of no use to tell young persons—any persons, indeed—not to care what is thought of them. They cannot help it. The opinion of others is very important to us all. This truth may at once be admitted; and in admitting it, we show sympathy which touches the youthful heart, and wins its confidence. It feels that it is understood. It will enter, then, into the distinction between a desire for the approbation of those whom we respect, and a desire for the admiration of the world; and it will also understand the difference between wishing to please, and wishing to give pleasure; wishing to please being a refined form of selfishness, and wishing to give pleasure, on the contrary, a form of unselfishness. Advice, however strict, given in this way, will be listened to cheerfully without irritation, and so it will be effective. The principle is the encouragement of good rather than the condemnation of evil, and the former is far more powerful than the latter.

It may, perhaps, be objected that this mode of dealing with faults is irrespective of religious principle; that we shall do better by teaching a passionate child to think of the meekness of Christ; and a vain child to seek for the approbation of God;

thus appealing directly to the highest of all motives of action.

In answer to this, it must be said, that the one principle does by no means exclude the other. Because you rouse a passionate child's energy by reminding her that God has given her a natural strength of character, and that this strength is intended to be used for self-discipline, it does not at all follow that you are to omit the lesson to be drawn from the meekness of Christ: or, because you tell a vain child to seek for approbation rather in giving pleasure than in personal pleasing, it does not follow that you should omit to direct her thoughts to the highest approbation of all—the approbation of God. But it must be remembered that all children and young persons are not equally open to these highest motives. Religious feeling is a plant of slow growth, and passion and vanity are plants of quick growth. Before the former can be applied as an efficacious remedy, it is often needful to do our utmost to uproot the latter. And religious feeling is also delicate and sensitive; if we attempt to force it we shall kill it. It does but jar and irritate the young mind to suppose that it can be influenced by motives which it is conscious it does not rightly appreciate. Some children are early touched by religious motives—they will respond to them at once; but others shrink from them, and turn away when an endeavour is made to thrust them upon them. The greatest possible care is needed with regard to this question of religion, and its direct inculcation as a motive of conduct. The subject must be reserved for another occasion, but it cannot too strongly be stated, that in

by Him, but the natural and innocent longing was acknowledged and encouraged: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations; and I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me." ¹ Once more, the Apostles rejoiced in their power over the spirits of evil. Our Lord promised them a continuance and increase of that power, and then came the warning. "Rather rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven." ² And if we would give advice efficaciously, we must also take care that we look at the character with which we are dealing as a *whole*. Every one who knows his own heart at all, knows how easily he may be misjudged by those who take but one phase of his disposition and overlook others. This is, in fact, the root of all prejudice and injustice; and it need scarcely be said that advice to be useful must be fair, and unbiassed. And this general outside view of a character will be peculiarly helpful and supporting to a child, or a young person, because it is so difficult for them to attain it for themselves. Children accept the characters given of them without examination; and if vanity, or obstinacy, or ill-temper, or any other disagreeable quality should happen to be very marked, the fact will in all probability have been impressed upon them by nurses, brothers, and sisters, until at length every other quality seems swallowed up in this unamiable characteristic. "Such a child is perverse or conceited," is said, constantly, as if that one trait described the whole disposition.

It is a gain, which cannot be estimated, when, after

¹ St. Luke xxii. 28, 29.

² St. Luke x. 20.

a general condemnation of this kind, a young girl's eyes are opened to the fact that, naughty though she may be in this respect, or even in a great many others, there is still some good remaining. People are afraid to tell children of their advantages, whether moral or physical, lest it should make them conceited. But conceit does not consist in knowing what we possess, but in over-estimating its value. No one can make a proper use of his powers unless he knows that he has them. The owner of the ten talents must have been quite aware that he possessed them, or he would never have been able to make with them ten talents more. Truth under any form is the very last thing we have to fear. And a child oppressed by the burden of some besetting sin, which, perhaps, she has for months been struggling against unsuccessfully, will enter upon the contest with renewed vigour, when it is pointed out to her that God has given her, in her own heart, principles and feelings which, instead of being hopelessly bad, are really pleasing to Him.

We do not find that our Blessed Lord rejected the good that existed in those who approached Him, because He also perceived the evil, or that He allowed the one to hide the other. The rich young man came to Him with the impulse of warm-hearted devotion, and inquired, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Our Lord tested him first upon those points on which He knew a good response could be given; and when in reply to the enumeration of the commandments He was told, "Master, all these have I observed from my youth," we are expressly informed that "Jesus be-

holding him loved him"¹—loved him for that which was good in him, in no way rebuked him because he had said what in his heart he, however erroneously, believed to be true; but only tested him still farther, and by that test sent him away grieved, yet with his eyes opened to the fact that his love was not that which he had believed it.

Again—one of the scribes listened to our Lord as he was reasoning with the Sadducees, and "perceiving that he had answered well," ventured, in a spirit very different from that of the lawyer, to question him for his own satisfaction. Our Lord replied fully, and when the scribe exclaimed "Master, thou hast said the truth," the Redeemer seized, as it were, upon that sudden conviction, openly approved and encouraged it by the words, "thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."² Yet we do not read that the scribe, any more than the rich young man, was so far in earnest as to follow Christ.

But further, if we would give advice effectually, we must be watchful that we do not thrust it forward uncalled for. Every one knows the irritation caused by an acquaintance, or even a friend, who is always advising. Every one must have felt the impulse to reject the advice, let it be never so wise, simply because it was not asked for. Now, children are by no means so unlike grown-up people as we are sometimes apt to imagine. They are extremely alive to the rightful authority of the persons who advise,—they will not listen to the wisdom of Socrates, unless Socrates has a right to counsel them. Mothers who

¹ St. Mark x. 20, 21.

² St. Mark xii. 34.

bring up their own children well, are sometimes apt to think that they may lend a helping hand to their friends who are not quite so successful. They take upon themselves to criticize and suggest, sometimes to approve. Possibly, this interference may be endured by the parent; but it will be rejected by the children, and resented as an offence. Whatever is to be said to the young in the way of reproof or guidance, must be said not only in the right way, but by the right person, at the right time. As a matter of prudent counsel, the result of experience, the warning may be given, never, as a general rule, to find fault or to advise when the duty belongs naturally to another person. The governess, for instance, must reprove for herself, the mother for herself. If the mother receives the complaint of the governess, and undertakes to rebuke or punish an offence of which she is not personally cognizant, she will very frequently find herself in a difficulty. Excuses will be made which she cannot test, and counter complaints will be brought which, if they are listened to, lessen respect, and if they are rejected without a hearing, will awaken the sense of injustice. And so, again, if want of moral courage, or a dislike to saying disagreeable things, should induce a request that in some particular case we would, taking the office of a friend, reprove or advise instead of the person, whether parent or governess, on whom the duty really devolves, we shall do much better to decline. The request could only be made under the idea that we possess influence, and possibly we may. But if we give advice when we are not called upon to do so, we shall almost certainly lose it. If we would only

strive to recall the occasions on which we have been led in this way to interfere without an acknowledged right, (and who is there that has not, at one time or other, been guilty of this folly?) we should probably see ample cause, from our failure, to own that we were mistaken. Well-intentioned people are often so very eager to satisfy their consciences by giving advice! It is a great pity that they do not try to satisfy their understanding also. For there is such a thing as a morbid, an ill-regulated, even a selfish conscience, or rather that which calls itself conscience. As Dr. South says, "Conscience is no distinct power or faculty from the mind of man, but the mind of man itself applying the general rule of God's law to particular cases and actions." If, therefore, the mind is not enlightened by common sense, conscience must be at fault.

And so, once more, with regard to the right time for offering advice. We might be more anxious to act judiciously in this respect, if we would remember that, probably, more than half of the mistakes from which we have ourselves suffered in life, some of them, perhaps, being fatal as regards temporal advantages, have been owing less to the saying or doing that which is in itself unwise, than to its being said or done at the wrong moment. Impulse, impatience, the desire to get rid of a disagreeable burden, will urge us to express what is uppermost in our thoughts; and this is the common motive for a lecture at the time of forgiveness. The one idea suggests the other, and we say what we have to say without consideration. If we can only govern ourselves, be patient, watchful, tender-hearted, we shall soon find an open-

ing for the words of affectionate guidance which we long to utter; but (if we examine ourselves, we shall scarcely hesitate to acknowledge it) this longing to give vent to advice which we think will be useful, is too often only the longing to vent a little feeling of irritation; it is the excuse for saying that we have been annoyed or provoked; that we are weary or disappointed.

When our Blessed Redeemer met the disciples, after His Resurrection, He waited for many days, and vouchsafed to appear to them often, before we are told that He alluded to St. Peter's threefold denial, even by the question, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" That could not have been because He was indifferent, because He had overlooked or forgotten the sin. But he chose his time. He was content to wait. It was not of Himself He thought, but of the Apostle. He desired, we may believe, to reassure St. Peter, to give him ease in His Presence, before He would refer to his fall.

There is a lesson for us in that caution and patience; only, in practising it, let us remember that delay must never be omission. One is almost afraid at times to give a warning against a mistake on one side, lest it should be construed into approbation of a fault on the other.

CHAPTER XI.

TRAINING.

BUT there are many other ways of training and guiding the young, besides giving advice. Perhaps, indeed, advice, taken by itself, is the least efficacious of all the means we are called upon to adopt. There is a daily, hourly training, which goes on almost unconsciously, and certainly indirectly, through the medium of general conversation, arrangements for the employment of time, words dropped without any particular meaning; to say nothing of that most important of all educational influences, example. We are, in fact, all educating one another more or less. It is not a very pleasant thought, though it is a true one. It makes us so responsible. But we shall not teach ourselves to educate rightly by dwelling constantly upon the idea; for if we do, we shall probably be afraid to move, and shall attempt to remain inactive; forgetting that to stand still when the world goes on, is in its results a movement of the most important kind.

Perhaps, one of the most influential principles to be adopted in this daily, and what may be called unconscious, training, is that of seizing upon the good points of a character, whatever they may be,

and using them as engines for the extinction of the bad. This is, indeed, only following out in action the same idea which has been already suggested with regard to words. Implant and cherish good, and so, through God's grace, evil will die away.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." ¹ When we feel that we are the sons of God, when we are sure of the blessed hope of Heaven, the struggle for purity follows as a thing of course.

But, it may be objected, young people do not feel that they are the sons of God ; they cannot realize the hope of Heaven. Theirs is but an intellectual knowledge. Granted, in too many cases ; yet the principle may be applied in a different way. They may not be what is called religious, though there is no reason to assume the fact ; but supposing, for the sake of argument, that we cannot appeal to direct religious motives, are there no others which we may make use of ?

Let us first consider what our estimate of a character usually is. When we are called upon to describe it, what do we say ? "Such an one has a most violent temper, she is self-willed, and proud, but then she is very truthful and affectionate." Another is provokingly indolent and forgetful, but she is unselfish and very generous. A third is de-

¹ 1 St. John iii. 2, 3.

cidedly selfish, almost stingy; but she has a strong sense of justice, and is very trustworthy. A fourth is vain and irritable, but her conscience is quickly touched, and she is very open and candid.

There is no character which is all evil; none which has not some one or more good qualities to counterbalance those which are faulty. And if we can see the disposition as a *whole*, so as to estimate the good that is in it, then our wisest plan will be to begin the work of training, by nourishing and cherishing it. An appeal to affliction and truthfulness may diminish the violence of passion. Unselfishness and generosity will rouse the indolent to exertion. A sense of justice, and conscientiousness as to truth, may open the eyes of the selfish; sincerity and candour may destroy the self-delusion of the vain.

And there is no danger in owning that this counteracting good does exist. On the contrary, it will awaken hope and energy; it will give heart to begin the struggle with the besetting sin; and let that once be commenced in earnest, and all that can be wished for, as regards religious principle, will speedily follow. People talk as if religion always took root and grew up in the heart in a certain necessary order; first, conviction of sin, then sorrow and repentance, then faith, then amendment; and as if nothing could be genuine goodness which did not follow in that order. This does not seem to be God's idea of religious growth; or, at least, there is a very great deal of thought and feeling which there can be no possible doubt that He approves, and yet which does not show itself in that order. Good in every form must come from Him, and if He chooses to

touch one heart through the medium of affection, another through natural unselfishness, another through truthfulness, or the sense of responsibility, why are we to look coldly on the work because, according to our notions, it is not the result of genuine religious feeling? Only lead the young to wish to be good; only make them see what their faults are, and induce them, in all earnestness and sincerity, to strive against them, from a desire to please God, and repentance and faith must soon be awakened, and that in a much more simple and enduring form than can result from excitement of feeling.

A striking instance of the manner in which the good points of a character may be used to neutralize and subdue the evil, may be found in our Blessed Lord's treatment of St. Peter.

The defects in St. Peter's character were undoubtedly ambition, impetuosity, weakness, and self-confidence, united with moral cowardice. We see these traits constantly exhibiting themselves. Ambition made him contest, jointly with the other disciples, the place of honour in Christ's Kingdom; it led him to ask the direct question, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?"¹ Impetuosity led him to cut off the ear of Malchus in the garden. Self-confidence, after impelling him to assert his willingness to die for his Lord, induced him to thrust himself into the high priest's palace—the place of danger—and moral cowardice then compelled him to the sin of denial.

¹ St. Matthew xix. 27.

Now, if we had been called upon to deal with a character like that of St. Peter, our first thought would probably have been that his faults required that he should be checked, kept in the background. We should, above all things, have feared to place him in a position of prominence, or of great responsibility. But it would seem that our Blessed Lord had no such fear. St. Peter was one of the chosen Three who were the witnesses of His glory, and of His humiliation. To him were words specially addressed, which, though afterwards spoken to all the Apostles, and therefore not exclusively his, have yet given him, in the eyes of a large portion of Christendom, a position above all his brethren. To him, also, was the charge "to feed the flock of Christ," repeated three several times, with the evident design of restoring him to the place of confidence which he had lost by his threefold denial; and to him, though the Apostle of the Jews, was granted the privilege of being the first to open the door of hope to the Gentiles.

What was the meaning of this training—for training it certainly was; and what was its result?

We have spoken of St. Peter's impetuosity and ambition, his self-confidence and moral cowardice. Was there nothing more noble, more winning, in his character? Can we forget the intensity of his affection, his eager self-devotion, his simplicity, and candour? Nourish these characteristics, by placing the individual in a position in which they will be peculiarly brought forth, and give him the experience of his own weakness, and the sense of a heavy responsibility, and the very exercise of the good

will, almost unconsciously, tend to destroy the evil. It would seem to have been thus in St. Peter's case. Placed in a position of prominence, commanded to feed the flock of Christ, he had full scope for the exercise, in its best form, of his earnest impulsiveness. Love to his risen and forgiving Lord, converted his natural impetuosity into an enduring desire to live and to die for Christ; the desire was strengthened by every opportunity for action; and when he had learnt to desire Christ's glory, he no longer ambitiously sought his own. His simplicity and singleness of character enabled him to direct all his energies to one sole object, and this gave him a spirit of determination which, to a certain extent, must have counteracted his moral cowardice; though it is evident from his conduct, when the controversy respecting circumcision was carried on, that he was still liable to be swayed by the fear of the world's opinion.

His candour, exercised by the continual call to weigh and judge the character of men, and deepened, doubtless, by the recollection of past transgression, checked his self-confidence; and the sense of an overpowering responsibility gave the balance that was wanting to a disposition containing in itself so many elements of inconstancy and inconsistency.

Let any one read St. Peter's epistles, especially the first, by the light of St. Peter's character and life, and he will see how, through God's grace, and His merciful training, evil may be converted into good; the sins of a fallen nature into the virtues which belong to the saints of light.

There is still the evidence of an ardent spirit,

rejoicing in temptations, and regarding the trial of faith as the pathway to glory and honour; but that glory is always connected with the thought of the sufferings of the Saviour whom he so dearly loved; and from those sufferings are deduced the lessons of patience and humility, which the Apostle had himself learnt by such a grievous experience. Urging his converts to warfare—for St. Peter's energetic spirit must always have felt the necessity of conflict—he tells them to arm themselves with the Mind of Christ, to clothe themselves with humility, that so they may have the strength of God on their side; to be sober and vigilant, resisting the devil by steadfastness in the faith; and, as if recalled by these words to the consciousness of the unstable, uncertain disposition, which even to the end of his earthly career, he must more or less have had cause to struggle against, he closes his warning with that most solemn prayer, which contains all that the most anxious heart can crave, for those about to enter on the battle of life.

“The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His Eternal Glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”¹

It is the description of St. Peter's own career, the utterance of his own experience of His Redeemer's enlightening, strengthening, establishing love. And if the training which he received may not, as in fact it cannot, be safely adopted in all its particulars by us, it nevertheless gives us a lesson which may be

¹ 1 St. Peter v. 10.

of infinite importance to us, if we will but apply it, by the light of reason, to the education of the young.

In the routine of daily life it is wiser to cheer with approbation than to be frequently finding fault, wiser to trust than to suspect, to appeal to affection than to reprove and reproach.

Such a suggestion as this may be misunderstood. It may be interpreted to sanction weak-minded indulgence. This is the risk that must always attend every general observation, especially one which has reference to education. Yet the rule may hold good notwithstanding the mistakes of those who attempt to apply it. It is not a rule applicable to little children, or children of three or four years old. At that age, there must be a constant, gentle check, a continued reminding of what has been commanded. The mind is so plastic then, that one idea is almost instantly effaced by another; it is only by repetition that we can produce any permanent impression; and to overlook a fault is in part to cherish it. But it is very different as years go on. The character then develops, as it were, of itself. There will be peculiar tastes, tempers, feelings, all which in part constitute what is sometimes called the idiosyncrasy of the individual, over which we have no control. We can no longer mould it; we can but guide it; and if then we are perpetually reproofing and punishing—though there may be just ground for our complaints—we shall destroy the very principles on which we must depend for the conquering of those faults. Let us only ask ourselves (if we have forgotten what we felt when we were young), what we should feel now, if we were

openly reprov'd every time we gave way to a besetting temptation, known perhaps only to ourselves. What irritation and almost despair it would cause! Or if, taking a low view of sin, we strive to resist a temptation merely because we are ashamed of yielding to it, and dread the reproaches of conscience if we do yield, how powerless the principle is! But if we think that our Redeemer is watching us, and will be pleased with us if we overcome, the effort ceases to be an effort. And, in like manner, a girl who has been reprov'd for a bad habit every day for months, and has never apparently made any attempt to subdue it, but has only become sullen by being continually punished for it, will grasp, and battle with, and conquer it of her own accord, if some strong affection is roused, some motive suggested which shall make it appear in the light of love rather than that of stern duty.

It is in this way, in fact, that the religious principle, when once it has taken root in the heart, acts so as to change the whole character in a degree acknowledged to be supernatural.

The man who would have struggled fruitlessly for his whole life against some favourite sin, when only human motives influenced him, will relinquish it at once when the love of God has touched his heart. And, though in a far lower degree, all good principles have somewhat of this same converting power. Let a careless, forgetful, yet conscientious child, be placed in a position of responsibility, and the sense of authority and duty will do more than years of warning towards correcting the habitual negligence. Give an extravagant, but honest girl

an allowance, and the necessity of strictly paying her debts, corrects the extravagance. Let an indolent but affectionate girl be placed in a position which makes others dependent upon her for happiness, and she will rouse herself to exertion.

This appears to be the clue to many of those orderings of God's Providence, which at first sight are so strange and unaccountable to us. We see the weak-minded placed in a position which requires strength; the vain surrounded by those who minister to their vanity; the proud permitted to rule; the selfish allowed opportunities for tyranny; the passionate for violence. We say continually; "if such an one had only been differently circumstanced, he would have done well." But this is scarcely justifiable language. Who ordered or permitted those circumstances? If it was God, then surely He knew best. He must have seen, what we could not see, that there were other counterbalancing qualities in the character which, under those same circumstances, might, if the person himself had so willed, have served to counteract the temptation; which might indeed have done so all the more effectually from the very position of trial in which the individual was placed.

This does not, indeed, prove that we, in our ignorance, may venture to do what God does in His perfect knowledge, and voluntarily place the person, about whom we are anxious, in a situation, which, we know, is likely to excite the faults against which he has to guard. But it may reconcile us to many events in life, which appear to us untoward; and it may assist us in the decisions we are sometimes forced to make, in which outward circum-

stances appear to call a person to a certain post, whilst natural qualities appear to render him unfit for it. We are judges of outward circumstances, so far as to be able to see whether there is any claim of duty in them. We are not judges of individual character, so as to foretell what effect those circumstances will have upon it.

And further—as it is more essential to draw out the good points of a character than to set ourselves to uproot the bad, so there is no reason to dread the effect of praise, when such good qualities are exhibited in action. On the contrary, praise, when well deserved, is a most efficacious instrument of improvement.

An idea is entertained by some persons that praise involves the idea of merit; and as no one can do more than his duty, and, therefore, no one can, strictly speaking, have any merit, it is supposed that to praise encourages a false motive of action.

If it be so, then is man's system of education wiser than God's. Most certainly we never find that God fails to praise, on the contrary, it would seem as though He carefully singled out matter for commendation, even in characters which, to the human eye, would seem full of imperfection. St. Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit, gives us a list of those who, in the old times, were distinguished for their faith; he makes honourable mention of them, as those that pleased God. We hear of Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah, not one of whom but exhibited great infirmity of character; as if to make us feel that the Almighty will never overlook what is right in the heart, though there may be much in it also which is very wrong; and if we would seek for

instances of praise, given directly to the individual, the Bible is full of them.

Let us think of Abraham listening to the voice of the angel, as he pronounced a blessing upon the patriarch's obedience. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My Voice."¹

Must not the promise, vast though it was, have been, at first, almost overlooked in the overpowering joy of such approbation. Or, let us hear Solomon making his request for "an understanding heart," a request which, we are expressly told, "pleased the Lord;" and receiving for answer, "Because thou hast asked this thing, . . . behold, I have done according to thy words: . . . and I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days."²

"Solomon awoke, and behold it was a dream;" but it was no dream that he had received the praise of the Almighty, and in thankful delight, "he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants."³

¹ Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18.

² 1 Kings iii. 11, 12, 13.

³ 1 Kings iii. 15.

Again, when Josiah, in his youth, dedicated himself to God's service, and yet failed to obtain forgiveness for the people who had so grievously offended, surely the words of praise for his own individual piety, must have been inexpressibly consoling. "Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord . . . and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before Me; I also have heard thee, saith the Lord. Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered unto thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place."¹

Or, if we turn to the New Testament, can we possibly forget the open, decided approbation shown by our Blessed Lord, in so many instances; the praise bestowed upon the faith of the centurion, and the Syro-Phœnician woman; upon the devotedness of Mary, when she sat at His Feet and heard His Word; and upon the penitent love of the woman who was a sinner? Can we put aside the parables, which tell of the talents diligently used and increased, and the wonderful words of acceptance, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?"² Or the yet more thrilling, because more distinctly real, prophecy of that glorious praise which awaits the Redeemed—"Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?"³

¹ 2 Kings xxii. 19, 20.

² St. Matt. xxv. 23.

³ St. Matt. xxv. 34.

It would seem folly to dwell upon the subject of praise, as if it could ever be a matter of doubt that it is allowable, were it not for the misconstruction of persons who, finding it incompatible with their theory of salvation, or with their experience of human imperfection, imagine that there is such danger in its application, that it must either be as much as possible omitted in education, or counteracted by the constant repetition of the fact, that every act of a fallen creature has in it something sinful, and that the best of men can never merit praise.

No one could have known that fact more certainly than He who made man. No one could have felt it more keenly than He who died for him. Yet we never find our Redeemer shrinking from giving praise; we never find Him hedging it about, cautioning and warning at the very moment when He is bestowing it. Praise, as it comes from His Lips, comes freely, fully; it is the outpouring of His love. He does indeed, on one occasion, remind His disciples that when they have done all, they have only done their duty; but He expressly adds, "Say (that is, say to yourselves), we are unprofitable servants."¹ He does not declare that *it will be said to them*; neither does He say it. Rather, He tells them that even the "cup of cold water" given in His Name will have its reward. It need scarcely be stated that praise, to be valuable, must be given cautiously, cordially, and rarely. Praise given indiscriminately, as a matter of course or of necessity, is really no praise. But, when

¹ St. Luke xvii. 10.

well deserved, it should never be withheld, even though it may seem likely to minister to vanity. For vanity, like all other faults, is the distortion of a quality in itself good. Love of approbation is inherent in human nature, and without it we could never know the happiness derived from the consciousness of God's favour; and though in the false liberality and gentleness of the day, a great deal of sinful vanity is fostered under the title of love of approbation, yet the wrong application of an epithet does not interfere with the fact that it may be applied rightly: That which is well done—done from a right motive, and in a right way—does deserve commendation; and if from a dread of consequences we withhold the legitimate reward, we shall but foster in another shape the very evil we dread. Mortified vanity, when joined with a sense of injustice or unkindness, is more deteriorating to the character than gratified vanity, because it excites envy and ill-will; and in all cases, by a natural reaction, the fact of not having received the praise which is our due, renders us liable to over-estimate our own deserts.

But there is something more than praise which, in examining the principles of Divine education, we find to be allowable. God's servants were all more or less faulty, and they were reproved and corrected for their faults; but, in so far as they were sincere, their service was acknowledged with tokens of outward respect. The word may seem strange when used in such a connection of ideas, and yet it is not strange. All that is good comes from God, belongs to God, and therefore when He respects and honours

it, He respects and honours that which is a portion of His own perfect nature. Enoch, "translated that he should not see death;" Noah, saved with his family when a guilty world perished; Abraham, blessed with the title of "the friend of God;" Job, acknowledged as God's servant at the moment of his deepest humiliation; Moses, bearing on his countenance the reflection of the dazzling glory of the Most High; Daniel, raised to power in the court of Babylon; these, and very many other of the distinguished characters under the Jewish dispensation, were openly recognized as worthy of respect. They were not only supported in the midst of trials, but they were placed in positions in which the world was compelled to own their greatness. And even under the Christian dispensation, when men were to be taught the blessedness of poverty of spirit, and the nobleness of meekness, and this through the medium of the world's contempt and persecutions, it was but in order to the more complete triumph of those virtues. Christianity conquered the world even outwardly, and it conquers still. God has decreed that it shall be revered, and it is revered; too often with only an external respect, but even this false homage is the tribute paid to its intrinsic greatness.

It may seem far-fetched to use such an illustration with reference to the education of children in ordinary daily life; but "the child is father of the man," and is open to the same influences. The feeling of being respected by others is a great support to self-respect; and without self-respect the character must be ultimately degraded. A watchful, conscientious child,

for instance, is deserving of respect, though there may be very many defects in her character. And it will be good both for herself and others that these qualities should be acknowledged openly; more especially if there should be any deficiency of intellectual power likely to excite ridicule. Respect will help her to bear up against her other shortcomings, and assist her to get the better of them. It will enable her to use the moral capital with which she is to begin her trade. Show a child that she possesses something sterling—something which those to whom she looks up can really value, and she will be encouraged to labour more heartily in other ways. Praise, if given in private, will not be sufficient. There must be a public testimony to moral worth. And this is very different from the praise which ministers to vanity; for it can be given only by those who are judges of what is good, and it will be valued only in so far as it is the result of such sound judgment. Admiration may be offered by the ignorant, and it will be willingly accepted by the vain; but respect necessarily implies the appreciation of the qualities which deserve it, and may therefore be accepted without fear, since none can receive it without being conscious how little—if they were known as God knows them—they would be found to merit it.

CHAPTER XII.

CONFIDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

To show respect for the good qualities which a child may possess, is, it has been said, both useful and important, when we are attempting to educate. But the mode in which this respect should be shown, may not, to all persons, be clear. There are, indeed, many ways of evincing the feeling which will at once suggest themselves, but they seem to belong to a more advanced age; and yet the two which are likely to be the most efficacious may be tried with those who are quite young, and will almost always be found successful as means of strengthening the character and raising the tone of mind. All young people are open to the sense of confidence and responsibility, and these influences being, as they are, of such great importance, it may be desirable to consider them separately, and in detail.

"I tell you this because I trust you," is an appeal to all that is honourable in the heart; and if we would find a sanction for such confidence in God's education of his servants, we shall be at no loss for instances of it in the Bible. Let us turn to that most wonderful interview between the Almighty and the patriarch Abraham before the destruction of the cities of the

plain. "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." ¹

It was many years afterwards that Abraham's faith endured its severest trial; but it may surely be thought that the consciousness of the especial confidence placed in him by the Almighty, nerved him, in the hour of fiercest probation, to prove that he was not unmindful of it.

Or, again, consider the case of Daniel;—after three weeks of abstinence and humiliation, a revelation of future events—events which carried his thoughts to the end of Time, and the final establishment of the Kingdom of Christ—was made to him, and the reason is given.

"Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words." ²

The remarkable point about this revelation is, that unlike the generality of the scripture prophecies which were uttered avowedly for the benefit of a nation, or of future ages, it was given especially for the enlightenment of the prophet himself, and ends with distinct words of consolation addressed to

¹ Gen. xviii. 17, 18, 19.

² Dan. x. 12.

him. "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."¹

In this respect it is a striking contrast to the revelation made to Balaam, of which he knew nothing till the moment came when, finding himself compelled to utter it before Balak, he confessed himself the unwilling instrument for foretelling the future greatness of Israel. "Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it."²

Or, once more, let us look to the conduct of our Blessed Lord in this respect, with regard to His disciples. Again and again we are told of His explaining things to them privately, taking them apart, foretelling the sorrows which were coming upon Him. He seems, indeed, to have made it a chief object of His intercourse with them to show that He trusted in them, and to evince this trust by confidence. Almost the last day before His betrayal, as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, we find His disciples gathering round Him with questions respecting the precise fulfilment of the prophecy which He had just before uttered. They came unto Him, we are told, privately, as if assured of a hearing; and the freedom of their inquiry is as remarkable as the fulness with which it was answered. It shows such entire trust in the willingness of their Lord to satisfy them. "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"³ Such a question could not have been put unhesitatingly,

¹ Dan. xii. 13.

² Numb. xxiii. 20.

³ St. Matt. xxiv. 3.

unless the disciples had, from long experience, known that it would have been received graciously.

And so also yet later, in that marvellous discourse which preceded the Redeemer's agony, there is not only the assurance and the promise of abiding love, but of abiding confidence. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth : for He shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak : and He will shew you things to come." ¹

Confidence, indeed, is made by our Lord the very test and evidence of love. "Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." ²

And the working of the same principle is shown in the formation of the Christian Church. St. Paul caught up into the third Heaven, and hearing unspeakable words ; and St. John receiving a revelation in the Isle of Patmos, were alike instances of men strengthened in positions of peculiar trial and eminence by the encouragement of confidence, as well as the discipline of suffering.

Now, it may be thought, that confidence will spring up, as a matter of course, between parents and children ; that it is the result of natural affection and mutual interests, and that in consequence there can be no necessity to insist upon it. But upon examination we shall find that such is not necessarily

¹ St. John xvi. 12, 13.

² St. John xv. 15.

the case. On the contrary, under the present system of education parents and children—mothers and daughters especially—too often enjoy but very little of each other's confidence.

In the first place, their previous lives have, for the most part, been distant. The children have lived in the schoolroom; the mothers in the drawing-room. This perhaps is a necessity, but it does not tend to produce confidence. But the daughters have also advanced beyond their mothers; that is to say, they possess, as a general rule, more showy accomplishments. They can perform more wonderful feats on the piano, and talk French and German with greater facility, if not with greater correctness. They have not yet forgotten the dates of the English kings, and they have caught up the terms of science from attendance upon lectures on all imaginable "ologies." They ride more boldly, and talk more loudly, and dress with greater eccentricity. Their mothers are not their companions, because they do not join in these things. The schoolroom or the morning room is appropriated exclusively to the "young ladies" of the family; and when their mother enters she is received as a visitor, and finds herself decidedly in the way. This is too often the case even where the daughters have been educated in habits of quiet domestic occupation, and have no desire to be numbered amongst the "fast girls" of the nineteenth century. They are fast in one sense, in spite of themselves; that is to say, they are, in thought and purpose, travelling onwards, whilst their mothers are travelling backwards. All of us who have reached the middle of life, and are descending the

bill on the other side, must be more or less conscious of this. How many of us are gaining new ideas, and forming new theories, and striving to carry them into practice as we did when we were young? How many of us are not rather standing still, gazing around with somewhat of pity and regret, as we watch what we consider the follies of the young enthusiasts of the day? How many of us are not even in a degree retrograding—going back to old established principles, which we once thought we had relinquished for ever, but which experience has proved to be more sound than the theories that once appeared so inviting?

We cannot rush forward with the young, because we see too plainly whither they are going. We cannot hold them back, because they have life and energy on their side; and the law of God's Providence has ordained that they shall be the leaders in life's race. And therefore we stand apart; it may be, carefully performing our own duties—working, according to our own rules, the plans which we have tested and approved; and suffering them to walk at will according to theirs.

The separation between old and young has always existed in a certain degree, and it must continue to exist to the end of Time; the mistake is in permitting it to produce estrangement and want of confidence.

It was the remark of a very shrewd observer of human nature, "Young people *think* that old people are fools; old people *know* that young people are so."

If they know it, then let them make use of their knowledge. Because they are wiser than the young, therefore they are called upon to offer sympathy,

encouragement, assistance, so far as they possibly can ; to relinquish their prejudices, to endeavour to look at life as the young look at it ; to work with them in their way, even though it may not be the most perfect way. The old have once been young, and they can, therefore, in some degree, recall and imagine the feelings of the young. But the young have never been old, and they cannot, therefore, be expected to understand the feelings of the old. All good things, all high, noble, generous wishes, all innocent amusements and pursuits, all efforts at usefulness, however unlike those which we should ourselves have set on foot, demand our sympathy ; and if we give it—give it unsparingly—we shall in time receive our full recompense. Young people delight in the support of their elders, when they feel that it really is support ; and they will listen to suggestions, and sometimes even profit by others' experience, so long as they are sure that there is no implied censure underneath the advice offered. They will, in short, give their confidence, and share their interests ; but in order to this result, one preparatory step is needful—confidence must first be given to them.

And here, in the majority of cases, lies the difficulty, more especially in those instances in which the superiority of talent and energy are to be found on the side of the parent. A clever woman—active in mind and body—accustomed to rule,—in the habit of forming plans and carrying them out successfully—is very slow in arriving at the perception that the time is come when others are to be admitted to share her labours ; more especially when in that word,

others, her children are included. They have been subject to her; she knows all their defects, she has suffered from their deficiencies, she has no confidence in their judgment. What she wishes to do can be done much better by herself. And then they are inclined to differ from her, and she has not been used to be differed from. She does not understand her children being her judges. It seems as if it would be impossible to work with them without mutual frets and jars; and so the mother pursues her duties, and leaves her young daughters to their amusements; not perceiving that by so doing she is really fostering that common self-deceit which leads us all to think that so long as things needful to be done are done, it does not signify who undertakes them. Young people, and elderly people, too, will often entirely neglect certain duties themselves; and yet, because they are attended to by others, never open their eyes to the fact of their own shortcomings. Thus, to perform duties by deputy is the source of some of the most lamentable self-delusions by which the character may be lastingly deteriorated.

Or again, perhaps the mother takes another view of the case. Rule and manage she must. It belongs to her position, and no one else would, so she thinks, be able to do as well as herself. But her daughters may be made useful, and so she gives them certain things to do. They are to keep accounts, or to visit a school, or to read with a young servant, or to superintend some domestic arrangement, perhaps even to order dinner. They are summoned from their own occupation, and the duties are proposed to them. To the mother's disappointment, the idea is

received with coldness. The young ladies prefer their pursuits in the morning room, and do not show any willingness to lighten their mother's labour. She thinks them selfish and ungrateful, and she may not be very far wrong.* But there has been a mistake on her side. We, none of us, like duties simply as duties. Those rather cold and selfish girls who devote themselves to what pleases them, and cannot be called to help their mother without showing that they are disinclined to undertake the task, would probably have been the first to assist her with all their hearts, if she had set to work differently. A little confidence with regard to the duties would have caused them to be viewed differently. Accounts are very dull when we have only to add up figures, but they may be very interesting (always supposing we have a capacity for them) when we know what depends upon them. If a girl is told what her father's income is, and what are the claims upon it, she will have an object in watching the expenditure. And so in the care of schools or charities; let young people know what they are working for, and give them a share both in anxiety and in success, and they will put their hearts, as well as their intellects, into the task allotted them. But merely to obey, to do what one is told to do, because one is told, and without being at all enlightened as to the end and object of one's efforts, is to most minds so irksome, that, without a great effort of principle, the duty is too often before long either relinquished, or performed so carelessly, that it might as well be omitted altogether.

There are, indeed, religious systems which teach us to look upon the act of obeying, without the know-

ledge wherefore we obey, as the highest of Christian virtues. This is not the place for discussing the question, but one thing is quite clear, that, in the ordinary dealings of God with His creatures, such blind obedience is not required. We might have been so constituted as not to be able to foresee the result of our own actions. We might, for instance, have been as ignorant of the reasons why we are commanded to attend to certain social duties, such as hospitality, courtesy, respect, as Abraham was of the reasons why he was called upon to offer up his son. It is difficult to imagine such a possibility, and yet we shall see, upon consideration, that the moral sense which teaches us that it is our duty to act in a certain way, is quite distinct from the comprehension of the reason why it is good for us to do so. A little child knows when it has done wrong as clearly and as quickly as a grown-up man; but it cannot understand what it is which constitutes what may be called the mischief—the injurious consequence of the wrong. This comprehension is the result of reason; it becomes more and more evident as reason develops; and in thus giving us reason, enabling us to see how, and why, good produces good, and evil produces evil, God has, if it may be said with reverence, given us His confidence. He has taken us into His counsels, given us a share in His intentions, made us, as the Apostle terms us, fellow-workers with Him. If blind obedience were the one end to be obtained by this state of probation, we might have been as children all our lives—gifted, indeed, with moral sense, and placed in positions in which that moral sense would be called into exercise,

and the choice of obedience or disobedience be given us—but with no power beyond. But God wills that we should give Him our hearts, and in order to win those hearts He grants us what we must grant to our children, when they are capable of receiving it, a knowledge of the end and object of the duties required, as well as the command for their performance. This confidence, it may be observed, is quite distinct from the indulgence of curiosity respecting others: a fault especially reprov'd by our Blessed Lord when, in answer to St. Peter's inquiry, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" He said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me."¹ And so it is distinct also from the indulgence of speculations and inquiries respecting subjects which are wisely hidden. Such speculations were embodied in the question, "Lord, are there few that shall be saved?" and were answered by our Lord with the warning, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."²

The confidence which God gives is sufficient to arouse interest, and sustain energy; but it is granted only in that degree which is consistent with His purposes of probation and our own limited faculties. The mystery of evil—including its necessity, and the ultimate object for which it is permitted—is hidden from us; and so, also, is the purpose of our own creation. But the fact that we cannot know all, and that even if we could know we could not understand all, does not prevent God from giving us

¹ St. John xxi. 21, 22.

² St. Luke xiii. 23, 24.

that amount of information which will enable us to work with a definite aim, and one which He approves, though it cannot be that ultimate one which He himself intends. And so, we may venture to say, parents may give their children a share in their counsels, and explain to them, sufficiently, the objects they have in view, without attempting to bring before them the whole, which they might not be able to understand, or which it might not be fitting that they should. This is peculiarly the case with respect to some works of charity and mercy, in which young girls could not engage if full knowledge of all the circumstances connected with them were required, and yet in which they may be deeply interested, and be made to take a most useful part, by a little judicious confidence.

But it may be said, by thus trusting young people, and giving them a share in works of usefulness, we run the risk of marring those works. Granted—yet, let us ask ourselves in what line of conduct is there not risk? We undertake to do everything ourselves, and a fit of illness comes, and our works fall to the ground—because there are none to carry them on. There is one time of life when our duty is to learn; another, when we are to carry out independently what we have learnt; a third, when we are to hand over our tasks to others, and show how best they may be performed. This third stage is not always agreeable. It tells us too plainly of failing powers. It too evidently bids us look forward to the night that “cometh, in which no man can work.” But when we have arrived at this period, it is as much our bounden duty to face the fact, as it is to acknowledge any

other of those conditions of our being which set limits to our powers, and direct them into definite channels. To sit by and see our children performing imperfectly what we know we once did easily and well ourselves is no doubt a trial. But are we unable to bear with that which God bears with? He trusts his work to feeble hands. He waits with patience, whilst, from indolence or carelessness, we make mistakes, and but slowly learn to correct them. He allows His gracious intentions to be marred, His purposes of mercy to be apparently thwarted—and why? Because He is educating us; and because, for the furtherance of education, responsibility—that second powerful influence to which reference has been made—and with it the risk of failure is imperatively necessary.

We can, indeed, scarcely over-estimate the importance of responsibility as an instrument in the formation of character. It is seen, perhaps, most strikingly in the career of young men sent early to India, and changed from careless, headstrong, or idle youths, into calm judging, energetic, sensible men. It may be one cause of the fact, so often remarked, that India produces men ready for emergencies. But it may more or less be remarked everywhere, under all circumstances, and its value must be acknowledged, even though we may find cause to deplore the effects of its exaggeration. The children of the poor, the fatherless and the widow, how strangely old and prudent they are, at an age when the children of wealthy parents are scarcely out of the nursery! The daughter of the labourer, sent out to service at seventeen or

eighteen, makes her way safely, through dangers and temptations which the squire would shudder to think his own child could be exposed to; and at two or three and twenty is looked upon as qualified to judge, decide, and act for herself, like a woman of thirty in the upper classes. Or, in the case of persons of a higher grade, let us look at an elder girl left without a mother, and called upon to act as the head of a large family: if she is worth anything, how thoughtful she becomes—how careful and watchful for the little ones,—how industrious, how methodical! She has had no training—none at least which can strictly be called training—she has only had responsibility. It is that which has roused her, urged, checked, made her observant, self-controlled, given her sound judgment. Without responsibility, she would probably have been but as other girls; gentle, perhaps, and amiable, and desirous to do right, but not aware of any particular claim for exertion, and, therefore, not thinking it needful to make it.

And it is responsibility which, in the majority of cases, makes the difference between the young married woman and the young girl of the same age. Give a young person a house of her own, and servants to guide, and make the happiness of another dependent upon her, and she must, if she has any good at all in her, acquire habits of thoughtfulness and self-control. But the daughter living in her father's house is, too often, allowed to have no responsibility. Everything is arranged and provided for her without her effort, or if she is expected to undertake any particular duty, it must be performed in a way pointed

out for her beforehand ; whilst, very frequently, her omissions are corrected by some one more careful, so that she learns at last to think that it does not signify whether she attends to the duty imposed upon her or not.

There is no real responsibility in all this, and consequently no training. If we wish to make use of responsibility as an educational instrument, we must leave free scope for the exercise of individual will, and we must be content to bear the annoyance, when that will is wrongly exercised. Once perform a young girl's duties for her, or let others do so, and the idea of training her by responsibility is at an end.

This latter statement will probably be uncontroverted. But the necessity of leaving free scope for the exercise of individual will—what is to be said to that ? Is there really any occasion to enforce it ?

The fact will probably be disputed. Young ladies of the present day are supposed to have a great deal of will, and, what is more, to exercise it very independently.

No doubt they do, but then they exercise it wrongly, because against their parents' wishes ; and that which is now contended for, as being in itself good and desirable, is a sphere in which will may be exercised rightly, because with the parents' consent. To give one very slight, but very common illustration : a girl old enough to be taken into society is old enough to be made responsible for her own expenditure, and in order to do this, she must have an allowance. But she will then choose her own dress, and if she should not quite agree with her mother

in taste, there is no reason to charge her with disobedience in following her own will. If, however, the mother should prefer to retain the allowance, and the choice of dress in her own hands, then there must, sooner or later, be a clashing of wills. The mother will decide, and will think it wrong in her child not to yield at once to her judgment. The daughter will have the fancies belonging to her age, and may not be sufficiently dutiful to submit without resistance. An unpleasant breach must be the consequence; and both parties will think themselves injured. The mother will say that her daughter ought to be guided by her opinion. The daughter will say that at her age she ought to be allowed to exercise an independent will. The mistake lies in the mother's not having marked out a sphere within which, under certain limitations, will might be exercised. Questions of this kind are springing up daily in private life, too often causing coldness, undutifulness, suspicion, and angry sinful words and feelings, which it is very grievous to watch; they are so entirely opposed to Christian feeling and principle.

Correspondence, friends, the employment of time, of money, the choice of duties, must all, no doubt, have definite limits, but within those limits, why may there not be the free exercise of will? The object of education with us all is to teach us not merely how to obey, but how to exercise our will and to govern. It is this object, recognized in the public schools of England, by a system of delegated responsibility, that makes them what, with all their faults, they unquestionably are,—the most important engines for good, apart from direct religion, which we possess.

And the value of government is plainly acknowledged in the Bible,

The Apostles, when urged forward by the prospect of future rewards, were told that they were to "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." He who had used his ten talents, so as to gain by them other ten talents, was made ruler over ten cities. To govern well is indeed far higher and nobler than to obey well; and for this reason, that the power of perfect government in finite creatures involves the power of perfect obedience, since, in order to ensure its perfection, it must first be exercised upon self. Self-restraint, self-denial, self-reproof, self-discipline, far stricter than any which we could venture to exercise upon others, are in fact essential for the formation of a really high and noble character; but they are strengthened, if not originally inculcated, by responsibility; and from responsibility, freedom of action, is inseparable.

Observations of this kind are undoubtedly open to misconstruction. The tendency of the present day is so greatly to encourage independence, which leads to neglect and irreverence, that a person who ventures to advocate freedom of action in young people is very likely to be accused of encouraging them in their wilfulness and lawlessness. Even at the risk of repetition, it must, therefore, again be stated, that strict discipline, and absolute, instantaneous obedience, at eight years of age, are indispensable preliminaries to freedom at eighteen. The subject under discussion now, is not what is to be done with spoilt children, but how those whose education is just beginning may best be trained.

If the advice given should be reversed, or misunderstood, the error will lie with those who apply the counsel wrongly, not with the person who gives it.

And surely we need the less fear granting responsibility to the young, however inferior to ourselves they may be, when we mark the mode in which our Redeemer dealt with his disciples. For three years only was He with them—and yet long before those three years had expired He sent them forth to teach and to preach in His Name; and we hear of no restrictions, no laws, except of the most general kind. They were left to find out for themselves, who, amongst the inhabitants of the cities they visited, were worthy to receive them. They were plainly warned that their position would be that of sheep in the midst of wolves; yet the only caution given them was that they should be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” And so they went forth, but “when they were returned, they told Him all that they had done.”¹

Here, then, was the check. Certain great principles were impressed upon them, and a definite sphere having been given them, within which they might act freely, they returned to their Lord to tell how they had exercised their own independent judgment, and to receive from Him the further warnings and instructions which might be needful. Such was the training required for those who were afterwards to govern the infant Church; and so we find that when our Lord had finally withdrawn His visible presence from them, they were able to carry out the principles in which they had already been exercised,

¹ St. Luke, ix. 10.

and to use the experience they had acquired for the benefit of those over whom they were appointed to rule. Very remarkable indeed is the freedom upon all minor points which was left to the rulers of the early Christian Church. The great outlines of government were, we have reason to believe, given definitely—for allusions to them are plainly made in Scripture—but they were filled up as circumstances required, according to the needs of the moment, and the wisdom of the Apostles; guided, indeed, by the Holy Spirit, but yet not so guided as to interfere with free choice and human deliberation. Witness, for instance, the appointment of the seven deacons to undertake the secular business of the little Christian community; the decision of the first Council, upon the question of circumcision; the directions given by St. Paul to the Church of Corinth; in some of which he plainly states that he speaks without immediate guidance from the Spirit of God.

How unlike—how wonderfully different—is all this freedom, to the working of human power! Let us suppose ourselves—if we may be permitted to make such a comparison—called upon to establish a society which should have for its object the reformation of even a small State;—gifted with full powers, moral, mental, and physical—able, in fact, to carry out our will fully, and to foresee and provide against all difficulties. How strict would be our laws—how carefully guarded and checked! How anxious we should be to state precisely the way in which every one was to act under every possible emergency; how disinclined we should be to give even the slightest responsibility to those we felt were our inferiors in

intellect and principle! Volumes would not be sufficient to contain our rules, our cautions, and restrictions. This is the instinct of human nature. The power of trust belongs essentially to God. Man cannot trust others, because he distrusts himself. We see this plainly in all cases which involve the foundation of societies, or the working of political schemes: but we see it also even in such personal matters as the making of wills—the entail of property. It seems, indeed, to be so natural to men to wish to hamper their descendants, and take from them responsibility by tying them down to a particular line of action, that in some cases the civil power is actually obliged to interfere to prevent such restrictions being carried into effect.

And when we look at the actual working of societies and institutions in our own day, it is scarcely too much to say that the ruling principle of the majority, when founded for religious objects, is that of concentrated power, rather than delegated responsibility. Absolute authority, minute direction, on the one hand; absolute obedience on the other. The idea of escape from responsibility is, indeed, openly acknowledged, in some cases, to be the temptation to enter such societies. Whether these principles are necessary for the carrying out of the purposes of the institutions in which they are adopted, cannot of course be determined without full knowledge of what those purposes are. But upon consideration it would certainly appear, that action without responsibility, however instrumental it may be for the attainment of certain definite ends, will never be instrumental to the improvement of the

individual character; because it is contrary to the training appointed by God in nature, and the principles of education which He has marked out for us in revelation.

Our work is for a future as well as for a present generation. Woe be to us if we forget this!

It was for the worthless favourite of a worthless king to say, "*Après moi le deluge.*" When the one Eternal Future was overlooked, all other futures became indifferent. But it may not be so with us. Even now, as we labour with our whole heart and thought concentrated on some present purpose, Death stands, as it were, on one side of us, and Time on the other. And Time is pointing to the dial-plate on which the hours of our earthly existence are numbered; and Death is watching the hand of Time, as it silently but ceaselessly moves forward; and when Time shall touch the last figure, Death will lift his hand to strike, and our work will cease. But not our influence, not our teaching, not our counsel, and our warning. That will live on in others;—in those who are now the young, the ignorant, the thoughtless, the wilful—who must, perforce, take up our work where we left it—who must carry on what we have left unfinished—who must, like us, labour in their generation, and for their generation, and for those who are to come after them; or who, if they are unaccustomed to responsibility, will stand gazing in alarm as society—social and political—like the great car of Juggernaut, moves on; until, at length, too timid to move with it, too ignorant to attempt to guide it, they are crushed by its merciless wheels.

It sounds like imagination—unreality. It does not seem as if the conduct of separate individuals, without name or apparent influence, could really be of importance. And the sphere of each is small; the work to be undertaken is, in most cases, local and immediate. Let it be done, so we say to ourselves, in the best way, to suit the needs of to-day; and to-morrow, we may well believe, will provide for itself. True, in one sense; untrue, in another. Our work must, indeed, be done in the best way; but, can that be the best which excludes the co-operation of those who are to take our place when we are gone? If there are no learners, how can there, hereafter, be teachers? If we do not allow the young to practise themselves in independence and responsibility, how can they be fitted to do what we are doing?

And if we will but follow the example set us by our Lord, we need have no fear of the consequences of this independence. The disciples, as we have seen, were exercised in freedom of action and responsibility, whilst their Master was present with them. He did not wait until after His ascension to delegate to them His power; He granted it during His earthly life. All that He required was, that they should be accountable to Him. It is an example for us all. It may be followed in very small matters, but it will have very important results; and most especially in the case of girls called upon to live at home,—subject to their parents' authority, at an age when boys are sent out into the world to be, in a great degree, independent.

The same kind of freedom which is necessary for a boy, is, of course, entirely unsuited to a girl. She

cannot roam about by herself, or undertake separate work. She must be kept within limits, which will often appear irksome, and even needless, though, without them, she would be involved in serious evils. The very fact of the necessity of these restraints renders it, however, incumbent on those whose duty it is to insist upon them, to give the sense of freedom within the restricted circle. There can be no interest in home life without it. All that wealth and refinement, and even love, can offer, may be lavished upon the young, but without that freedom of action, which is involved in responsibility, they will still be dissatisfied.

The human mind soon grows weary of amusement; it learns to dislike splendour, and to be sickened by luxury. The one thing of which it never tires is the sense of usefulness; and no person can be thoroughly useful who is not accustomed to responsibility. The girl who is the victim of ennui in the drawing-room, finds time only too short when she is allowed to follow out some plan of usefulness in the schoolroom or the village; and if this plan is furthered and encouraged by her mother, they must become one in feeling and confidence, and the risk of independence is then over.

The advantage of this early training in responsibility can only be fully perceived by comparing it with the effects of an opposite system.

Work alone—work performed mechanically, simply as an act of obedience—has, it has already been said, but little influence in the formation of character. What we all require to learn is thoughtfulness; and the habit of suffering others to think for us, instead

of thinking for ourselves, is very easily gained, but by no means so easily lost. The exceedingly narrow sphere of some persons' duties; the way in which they shut their eyes to the fact that there are claims lying beyond the circle of their own families, is very astonishing to those who are accustomed to realize the fact that no human being can be associated with them, even for ten minutes, without having some claim upon them for kindness and courtesy, if not for more direct efforts for good. We see persons apparently amiable in disposition, wishing to do right, scrupulous in their religious duties, yet, through it all, living for themselves, working for themselves, studying for themselves, thinking and planning for themselves. We see the possessors of great wealth, both men and women, by no means cold-hearted, or avaricious, or wilfully extravagant, attending to the plain duties incumbent upon them as landlords, or heads of households, but spending all their superfluous income upon themselves, doling out their gifts and their charities in a proportion which, when compared with the means that they have in their power, would be ludicrous if it were not so infinitely sad.

We see others with scarcely any claims upon their time, beating out their scanty occupations like a leaf of gold-beater's skin, in order to make them cover the surface of the day; and yet all the while praising and admiring works of charity and self-denial, taking, indeed, a real interest in them, so far as that can be called interest which shrinks from any actual participation in the work.

What is the secret of this frightful veil of self-

deceit, this moral blindness which shuts out from so many the extent of their duties? Merely the want of teaching, of early warning, the habit of doing what they have been told to do without exercising independent thought or recollecting their own responsibility. The young girl who goes into a shop and orders what she requires, and has it put down to her mother's account, has not the least idea of the value of money, or the duties which attend its possession. She has no inducement to practise self-denial because no one, so far as she can see, will be the better for it. The habit of indulging her own wishes, without thought for others, is in this way acquired, and when at length she has the command of an independent income, she continues the system of self-pleasing simply because it is a habit. And so, again, when the daughters of a family, although performing certain mechanical tasks, concentrate their interests in pursuits for their own gratification, whilst their mother undertakes to arrange and carry out the social and domestic duties of life; it can be no matter of astonishment if, when they have houses of their own, they are neglectful of the wants of their friends, or unmindful of the needs of the poor. They are but doing what they have been trained to do. The world went on very well without them when they were young, why should it not do so now that they are older? They have no knowledge what poverty, and care, and grief are; how can they search for and sympathize with them? If they had only been practised in thoughtfulness in early life, all this would probably have been different. Responsibility

—the consciousness that certain duties were left in their hands to be discharged in their own way, at their own time, but that still discharged they must be, or that others would suffer—would have tended to form a habit of unselfish consideration which might have made them centres of kindness and benevolence in the positions which they were afterwards called upon to occupy.

And it is vain to say that duties are not at hand; that in country places, or amidst the necessary restrictions of a life in London, young people cannot be made useful. The proverb, "Where there is a will there is a way," is never more applicable than in the case of duties. Let us do what comes before us at the moment, in whatever place, under whatever circumstances we may find ourselves, and the performance of this first duty will open the door for a second. If we cannot go out to seek for work, we may find work that can be brought to us. If it cannot be undertaken for a permanence, it may be for a time. Though it be ever so small, ever so apparently unimportant, yet, if it is all we can do at the moment, let it be undertaken. No home affords the materials of true happiness where there is not to be found work for the good of others, in which many may have an interest, and yet in which each may have some separate responsibility.

These are not days in which such work will long be wanting, when there is a real wish to find it. The blessing that attends it, we shall more truly estimate if we consider what work really is. We often speak of it as belonging to our condition on earth,

as part of our punishment, and our probation. We forget that Adam laboured in Paradise, that angels labour for the service of God in Heaven; above all, that the Redeemer himself has said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

CHAPTER XIII.

HUMAN FAITH.

THE advantage of early training in responsibility will perhaps scarcely be disputed when asserted as an abstract proposition, but serious difficulties must arise when an endeavour is made to put the theory into practice.

The human mind is always tempted to exaggeration, and in the present age, especially, the spirit of independence is so powerful, that to strike the happy medium between undue subjection to authority, and undue exertion of separate will, may seem almost impossible.

Yet there are two principles which, if they were only inculcated upon children, from their earliest infancy, would make it comparatively safe to entrust them with independence and responsibility as they grow up. Faith and reverence are the counterbalances to independence in thought, and decision in choice and action.

A child's faith in its parents, and in those set over it, is as essential to its earthly, as faith in God is to its spiritual well-being. Let us, then, consider how faith is to be inculcated?

First of all, what do we mean by faith? The Bible, speaking of religious faith, tells us that it is

“the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ;”¹ and the words may in a lower and more restricted sense be applied to human faith, our faith in each other. A child’s faith in its parents includes the belief that all things necessary for its support and happiness will be provided for it, though it cannot tell how ; and also the assurance that the commands laid down for its conduct are intended for its good, although the reasons for them may not be seen.

And thus we are accustomed to distinguish between faith and reason ; to make faith the foundation of obedience, and reason only the instrument for the confirmation of faith. But is this quite a true statement of the relative positions of faith and reason ? Can faith really exist apart from reason ? or rather does not the very name of faith involve the idea of reason ? Faith is trust—trust in a person. A person, whether human or divine, must have a character, or, in other words, possess moral attributes. Faith, therefore, implies a recognition of these attributes, which cannot be made without the aid of reason. An idiot or a madman cannot exercise faith, except in that modified form of mechanical trust—the result of experience—which is shared in common with the brute creation. Herein lies the distinction between right faith and superstition ; between the religion of the Christian and that of the idolater. The faith of the idolater has no foundation in reason ; whilst the God of the Christian never demands of His creatures faith which has not reason for its foundation.

¹ Heb. xi. 1.

For instance, reason teaches us that God *is*, and that He is infinitely just and good. When we have once learnt this truth, then we are called upon to exercise faith, and to believe that all which this Holy God does is absolutely right and just, although we may not be able to understand it. We must obey His commands, though we do not see why they are given. So it is that our Christian faith also rests upon reasonable belief. We have abundant evidence of the truth of our Lord's existence and of His mission; evidence which appeals to our reason. Having this, we are bound to accept all which He tells us. Once own that Christianity is true, and it is as unreasonable to disbelieve any particular doctrine because it does not please us, or does not accord with our preconceived ideas of what God would do, as it would be to reject the truth that God is the Moral Governor of the world, because in many ways the method of His government is perplexing to us. Reason, in fact, lays the foundation of religion; faith builds the superstructure: let reason intrude into the province of faith, and it ceases to be reason. And the faith which the Christian exercises when, being convinced of the truth of revelation, he submits himself to its doctrines and precepts, is therefore as absolutely reasonable as that which the child exercises in its parents, when it drinks off the medicine given it, though entirely ignorant of the drugs of which it is composed.

It would seem to follow from this, that if man's reason were perfect, his faith would be perfect also.

And we certainly see that when, through wilful self-conceit, or passion, or the temptations or trials

of the moment, we become weak and incapable of reasoning soundly—then our faith fails.

Sin is not only sin; it is also folly; and God, who knew this, has most mercifully provided, by His teaching both in nature and revelation, that we should be constantly and practically reminded of the fact. We may sometimes have wondered, as we have watched the career of our friends and acquaintances, or looked back upon our own, why it is that follies, blunders, mistakes, are in this world so severely punished. The bad man—bad in his neglect of God, but wise in his generation—prosperes. The good man—good in his desire to serve God, but unwise in his generation—plunges into inextricable difficulties. May not the solution of this problem be found in the supreme importance of sound reason, as a foundation for right faith and true morality? If all the foolish actions of all the good people on earth were allowed to pass unpunished, simply because of their right intention, the cultivation of sound reason would be utterly neglected, and fatal confusion would be the result.

The more earnest a man is, the more devoted to God's service, the greater is his power of influence, and the more needful therefore is it that he should use that influence wisely.

The mistakes of good men are probably more injurious to society than the sins of bad men, and therefore, so it appears, God visits them with a more severe present chastisement.

The paramount importance of reason in the cultivation of all moral goodness or religious belief, and especially as the basis of practical faith, may be seen

by examining more minutely into the way in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself to His creatures by evidences which appeal to their reason, before He makes demands upon their faith.

The first question a child is taught to answer, as a foundation for its religious creed is, "Who made you?" "God." From the fact of its own existence it grasps intuitively the idea of the existence of its Maker. As reason develops, it learns from the wonders of nature the power of the Creator of nature; and from its own moral consciousness it is able to conceive the idea of moral perfection. The child so reasons without knowing that it reasons. It is aware that faith in God is a duty; it does not know that unless God had, through its unconscious reason, enabled it to comprehend the idea of His existence, faith would have been impossible.

This does not, however, mean, that mankind, left to themselves, would have been able to reason out fully the idea of God without the aid of revelation. What the power of human reason might have been if man had never fallen, we cannot tell; but certainly our own consciousness, and the experience of former ages, alike tell us that reason, as it now exists in man—liable to be swayed by passion and distorted by inclination—will too often, when left without aid, arrive at the most contradictory and absurd conclusions. Neither is any reasoning in the present day a proof of what reason by itself can do; because we stand upon a vantage ground which we have derived from revelation; and looking to the past days of heathenism, we can only point to one or two instances in which anything like an approximation

to the true idea of the Deity was reached. When once that idea was promulgated by revelation, man's reason, indeed, could not fail to accept it: but the power of examining into and confirming truth is inferior to that of discovering it: and this is a fact which, in extolling the power of reason, we are all too liable to forget; neither do we remember that, even in this modified form, reason can only examine and confirm what lies within its own province; it can only judge rightly of that which it is capable of understanding.

And yet, notwithstanding all these limitations, it is nevertheless clear that it is reason which prepares the way for faith; and so, when we look into the Bible, we shall find that God is continually strengthening His servants' faith by showing them that it has a foundation in reason. Abraham was commanded to offer up his son; but before that greatest effort of faith was required of him, his reason had taught him, by the experience of a watchful Providence, a continual interposition in his favour, a miraculous fulfilment of promise, a condescension unequalled in the history of God's dealings with man, that the Almighty Being whom he worshipped was infinite in His mercy as in His power; and could never demand that which would not ultimately be for the good of those who would obey and trust Him.

Moses was required to undertake a task for which he felt himself unfitted; but before he was sent to Pharaoh, God made an appeal to his reason, by showing him that he would have the power of working miracles conferred upon him. The Jews were

required to follow Moses into the desert; but before they set out on their journey they had, in the plagues of Egypt, seen enough to convince them, that in obeying his guidance, they were obeying the voice of God. Gideon was told to save Israel from the Midianites: his faith was weak, and he asked the evidence of a sign—something which should be a pledge to his reason that the promise of success would be fulfilled;—and God vouchsafed to grant him a double sign. Hezekiah was told, that in answer to his prayer he should recover from his sickness; and, in order to strengthen his faith in the promise, he was allowed to ask for a sign from Heaven; and the shadow of the degrees which had gone down in the sundial of Ahaz returned ten degrees backward.

So, again, when our Blessed Lord reproached the Jews for their unbelief, He implied that they did not make use of their reason. "The works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me."¹ And this argument was brought forward as unanswerable by the man who had been born blind, but had been restored to sight: "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing."²

The proofs of the Resurrection—the very foundation stone of Christianity—were reasonable proofs. Our Lord allowed Thomas to thrust his hand into His Side; He ate and drank with His disciples; He was seen of them for forty days; and spake to them

¹ St. John v. 36.

² St. John ix. 32, 33.

of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." And when at length He ascended to Heaven, He left with them the power of working miracles, as the appeal to the reason of mankind for the claim which was to be made upon their faith and their obedience. This, then, is God's plan for educating mankind in faith, and we may learn from it that, as nothing can be more erroneous than to insist upon using reason in deciding questions which belong to the province of faith; so nothing can be more unwise than to insist upon faith being exercised, when there is no foundation of reason on which to rest it.

And now to apply this same plan to the education of children.

Faith, as it has been said, is as essential to them in their relation to their parents and teachers, as it is to adults in their relation to God. But there is one vast distinction between the two cases. God may, and often does, insist upon implicit faith in us, because He has taught us, by reason and revelation, that He is infinitely perfect. But we can never bring forward the same argument to support our claims upon any one, because we are most imperfect. It does not, however, follow that we can make no such claim upon children, or that, according to a theory by no means rare, they are never to be expected to obey, unless they are told the reason why; and are never to be taught anything which they do not understand. There is a claim of authority, based upon the commands of God, which is always a reason for enforcing a child's obedience; and there is a natural superiority of comprehension, and of experience, in the parent, which must always be

acknowledged as the reason and groundwork of a child's faith. But when we go beyond this, we must remember that we are likely to meet with difficulties. A child's reason develops with its stature; often, indeed, more quickly than its stature. And as it reasons, so it will instinctively judge; and approve, or condemn. Now, if we find that God, Omniscient, Omnipotent, All-Holy though He is, has such compassion for the weakness of men, that He vouchsafes to enlighten reason in order to strengthen faith, so, surely, we may, in like manner, endeavour to enlighten and strengthen our children.

In infancy and early childhood there can, of course, be no appeal to anything but the principle of obedience. Neither can there be any permission given for disobedience afterwards; but if, when issuing a command, or insisting upon a certain line of conduct, we were to strive, as much as possible, to satisfy children's reason, by telling them, in cases in which explanation is possible, why we so acted, we should find them much more willing to put faith in us in those instances in which it might not be in our power to offer any explanation.

"My mother never gives an order without a good reason," is a thought which will at once still the risings of petulance and wilfulness when a command is not understood. But if we omit to give our reasons when we can do so, the thought will not be suggested.

And this faith in persons older than themselves is needful for young persons, not only as involves obedience, but as regards the training of their own minds. The reason why freedom and responsibility

are dangerous to the young is, that such liberty is likely to inspire them with self-conceit and overweening self-confidence. Faith in the judgment of those who have had more experience, is the natural counterbalance to these faults. But most of us learn this trust in experience only by finding what mistakes we have made in life from the want of it. We can reason now upon the actions of our parents, our guardians, and teachers, and see how wise and right they were, when we thought them absurdly wrong. But we failed, probably, to profit by their experience, when it could really have been of use, because it was never explained to us. We were told what we were to do, and how we were to do it, but the *why* was left to be discovered by ourselves, and, naturally enough, the answer was given wrongly. We attributed motives and purposes which never existed; we thought regulations to be the result of caprice, which were, in reality, the dictates of self-denial and good judgment; we put, in fact, but little faith in our superiors, and so the lesson has been learnt too late to be of use.

The necessity of this education in faith is more especially to be borne in mind as the counterpoise to the education in obedience. The two must never be separated by men, because they are never separated by God.

It will sometimes happen that, from a press of engagements, or from natural abstraction of mind, or simply from habit, parents who are most watchful not to spoil their children fall into the opposite extreme, and treat them as automatons. They expect to be obeyed; and they are obeyed; and

because their directions are good and sensible, the children's actions are the same. But with all this obedience in action, there may be a vast amount of disobedience in spirit, and it will show itself as soon as the opportunity for the exercise of freedom and responsibility is granted. Very painful it is to hear it said, "My father, or my mother, brought me up in such or such a way, and I am resolved that my children shall be brought up precisely in the contrary way." A resolution of this kind is nearly certain to involve very grievous mistakes.

To have no faith in the judgment of those who have been our guides, is to determine to buy our own experience for ourselves; and who, on looking back on his own career, will venture to count up the mistakes, the sorrows, it may be the sins, which have been the price paid for that experience? No one who sets out in life with such a principle can indeed safely be trusted with responsibility. Yet it is the natural result of an education in which the young are not trained to faith through the enlightenment of reason;—in which they obey simply because they are compelled to do so, and seldom or never have the reasons set before them which render such obedience necessary.

CHAPTER XIV.

RESPECT.

THERE is another safeguard against the misuse of freedom, which is closely allied to the principle of faith, and is, in fact, often its embodiment, though it cannot be said to be inseparable from it.

"Honour thy father and thy mother" is the first commandment with promise. What does honour mean?

Any child will reply, "Respect," including in this word all degrees of deference and attention. But suppose a father or mother not to be worthy of respect, what becomes of the commandment then?

We do not find that it alters. It has no exceptions. It does not say honour a wise father, or a good mother; but simply honour them as parents.

There must, then, be a respect which is *always* binding, which concerns itself with the outward form, whatever may be the inward spirit. For the latter may and must be more or less changeable, whilst the command given is unchangeable.

But it may be asked, How can this be? God, we are told, looks at the heart, it is by that He judges. According to the state of the heart each of us will be either acquitted or condemned at the Last Day.

If there is no respect in the heart, how is it that God can require or value it in the actions?

In endeavouring to reply to this question, we must examine into the reason of the ordinary proprieties and usages of society, which, in some cases, necessitate the adoption of forms of civility when the inward feeling of cordiality may be wanting; whilst in others they, in like manner, forbid them, though the inward feeling may exist fully.

We shake hands with a person whom we have known for years, though we feel that he is thoroughly uncongenial to us. We bow distantly to a person to whom we are introduced for the first time, though what we have heard of him may lead us to look upon him almost as a personal friend. The reason of this is, that we are, in fact, testifying by our manner, not our individual feeling, but our recognition of the relative position in which we happen to be placed. When persons overstep this line, and, misunderstanding the meaning of such outward forms, make them, in public, the vehicle of their private sentiments, every one instinctively feels surprised. Whether in general society we see a man refuse to shake hands with a person whom he knows intimately, or a woman fall into her friend's arms and embrace her, we are equally startled.

Respect, courtesy, politeness, are in their several degrees incumbent upon us, apart from the Christian spirit which they are generally supposed to indicate. They have reference to claims distinct from, though consistent with, and even dictated by it; claims which must exist so long as society exists. When

they are the result of real feeling, their value is, of course, greatly enhanced in the sight of the persons to whom they are shown; but when there is no such feeling they still may not be dispensed with, because the absence of feeling does not destroy the fact of the relative position of the individuals.

Persons sometimes speak of the terms used in beginning and ending letters as if they necessarily led to insincerity. They do not see that all which is involved in them is a question of relative position, "Dear," is, in writing, a word of courtesy, adopted by general consent to express that the person to whom we write is, in some degree, known to us, and for certain reasons is, for the time being, recognized as standing on the same social level with ourselves. "Truly," "faithfully," &c., are the same. When we go beyond this, and use affectionately, where society only requires "truly," we, of course, take the matter into our own hands, and are then answerable for the sincerity of our words.

The consideration of these forms and proprieties may seem very inapplicable to the respect which a child ought to show to its parents. There can be no formality, or propriety, it may be said, in such a case. Manner ought to be and must be the expression of genuine feeling.

"Must" and "ought" are little words soon uttered, but they have deep meanings. We know very little of what *must* be, and though we may believe that we know a great deal of what *ought* to be, one thing is certain, that we know much more of what *is*: and judging from what we see, there is reason to fear that in many cases children do not really feel respect

for their parents. And respect, moreover, is a very comprehensive term : it is not confined to one relation of life. The spirit of the fifth commandment embraces all those distinctions which place men in positions of superiority and inferiority towards others, and respect is, in all such cases, due because of the relative position of the persons, and not because of the feeling which may theoretically be supposed to exist between them.

But in this age the claim of respect is often imagined to have reference to moral qualities alone, and therefore it is supposed that, if we cultivate these qualities, we shall insensibly cultivate respect with them. How mistaken the supposition is, may be perceived by watching the manners and conduct of the young people of the present day. It would be very hard to say that none felt any respect for their parents, or their superiors ; on the contrary, we must all know cases in which there is a most sincere and deep-rooted inward respect, joined with an affection of the warmest kind, yet, in the generality of these cases, we shall find that it is the affection alone which is made evident to the world, and that often by means of tones and expressions which savour actually of disrespect. The feeling which exists is in fact independent of the question of relative position. It is even supposed that the recognition of this difference of position will chill affection, and therefore it is checked instead of being encouraged. Young people who are really fond of their parents are inclined to show their fondness by putting them on an equality with their brothers and sisters. They address them in an off-hand way—rush in and out of a room

before them, allow them to wait upon them; strive, in short, to show, as much as possible, that they feel perfectly at their ease with them. And the parents, thirsting for affection, delight in all this ease of manner: mothers allowing their boys to behave almost rudely to them, in their rough caresses and jokes, at the same time petting and fondling them as if the very absence of courteous respect was a sign of genuine affection.

The working of the same ideas may be seen in other relations of life. A young man will show his regard for a person older than himself by talking to him freely, asking questions, expressing his own opinions, as he would to a friend of his own age. This is his notion of civility and attention. A young girl will address or answer the governess whom she likes with a merry good-natured shortness of manner which she imagines to be indicative of the pleasant footing on which they stand towards each other; whilst in the case of ordinary persons, for whom there is no particular feeling, she has simply no manner at all. The little monosyllables of respect which our forefathers used are considered as absurdly chilling; and even deference of tone, which in such a simple, yet courteous way, marks the consciousness of a difference of age, or of social standing, is neglected. We respect each other still; but—we say it openly—we reserve our respect for character or talent, rather than for relative position; and as in the case of social position we do not feel ourselves called upon to show respect in manner, so with regard to age, from habit, we forget to do so, and in the end our respect is altogether laid aside. This is of course a broad state-

ment. There must be many modifications of it, but it will scarcely be denied that it is generally accepted.

There is, however, a very grievous twofold mistake in this neglect of social differences, for it is opposed to the teaching of God, both in nature and Scripture.

Our object in thus making respect depend upon moral rather than social distinctions, is, no doubt, in some degree, a desire that it should be genuine.

Very faulty as the present age is in many respects, and numerous as are the "shams" which meet us at every turn, there is still a prevailing, perhaps we may say, a preponderating desire for truth. Even those who do not feel it are obliged to profess it, and hypocrisy, as it has been well said, is, in all cases, "the homage which vice pays to virtue." Because we desire respect to be based upon a real foundation, we are inclined to restrict its outward expression to those instances in which it is claimed by superiority of talent or of moral conduct. But if superiority of position has also, by nature, a claim upon respect, there must necessarily be a falsity in failing to attend to the claim. To treat a prince like a peasant, is to ignore the true relation in which he stands to his fellow creatures; and that the claim does exist by nature, no one surely will, upon consideration, venture to deny. When men live together in a society they must, of necessity, institute certain laws for their general government. Those laws must be carried into execution; and some person must be made responsible for their administration. The authority may be delegated, but it still is authority; and being invested with it, the individual claims respect; not from the fact that he is, in himself,

superior to all others, for there may be many his equals in talent and goodness, but merely from the relative position in which he is placed with regard to them.

Respect for position¹ is, then, a law of nature; but it is also a law of revelation. This assertion scarcely requires illustration. Besides the numerous positive commands upon this subject contained in the Bible, the whole spirit of the Scriptures, as exemplified in the manners, the conversation, the conduct of the individuals who are brought before us in its narratives, shows a state of society, the very basis of which is the recognition, with the sanction of God, of distinctions of position.

Titles, gestures, and words of respect and courtesy meet us at the very beginning of the patriarchal life. Who has not been struck with the princely courtesy of Abraham when, bowing "himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth,"¹ he entreated to be permitted to purchase a sepulchre wherein to bury his dead? Who has not felt what, in these days, would be called the tone and spirit of a noble-minded gentleman, in the answer of Ephron, when Abraham declined to accept the gift which he had offered: "My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead."²

And the same tone is to be traced throughout the whole of the early history of the Jews; and a departure from it is a token of a lowered moral con-

¹ Gen. xxiii. 7.

² Gen. xxiii. 15.

dition. When Joab, after taking Rabbah, sends messengers to David, and, without preface or apology, gives him this order: "Gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name,"¹ we see at once how low David must have fallen in the sight of his own subject, when such a message, couched in such words, could be addressed to him; and pity for the king, mingles with indignation at the conduct of the rough, coarse-minded soldier who could take advantage of his knowledge of his sovereign's fallen, though repentant estate, to triumph over him with such proud disrespect.

And in the New Testament, the absence of all respect in the tone and language of the Scribes and Pharisees is most remarkable, as the sign of a degraded state of feeling in the rulers of the people, and, as a natural result, in the people themselves. There appears to have been no medium between worship and equality. Only in the case of a very few persons of social position and thoughtful minds, do we find anything like that outward respect which, even before our Lord's Divinity could be recognized, must have been demanded by the holiness of His Life and the wonderful character of His teaching. Nicodemus begins his inquiries by words of reverence. "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him."² The Galilean nobleman, in his anxiety for his son's life, speaks with eager respect, "Sir, come down, ere my child

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 28.

² St. John iii. 2.

die.”¹ The Roman centurion is so impressed with our Lord’s power and dignity, that he confesses himself unworthy to receive Him under his roof: but the Jewish rulers, and the people who flock around our Blessed Lord, address Him on terms of perfect equality; more than equality, of superiority; and, at length, even of contempt.

Let us only look at one short conversation. Our Lord was urging those who were really convinced that His mission was divine, to continue His followers, and warning them that the Jews, although the descendants of Abraham, were not really the followers of Abraham. “I speak that which I have seen with My Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to Him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love Me. . . . He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour Me. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death.” Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that Thou

¹ St. John iv. 49.

hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets ; and Thou sayest, If a man keep My saying, he shall never taste of death. . . . Jesus answered, Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day : and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham ? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him.”¹

This conversation is necessarily abridged, but its *tone* is fully given ; and let us ask ourselves whether we do not recognize in it the tone of the present day, —cavilling, doubting, critical, captious, refusing to own any power superior to itself, entering upon every inquiry in a spirit of equality, withholding all external signs of respect unless compelled to give them, and even lowering itself at length to insult. Yet we flatter ourselves that we have advanced infinitely beyond the Jews in knowledge, and in that largeness of mind which acknowledges goodness wherever it exists ; we are only like them outwardly. As the Jew of our Lord’s day could not go back to the ceremonious courtesy of the patriarchal times ; so, neither can we go back to the formal civility of our ancestors. It is a question of manner, not of spirit.

But who is to separate the two ? More especially, if respect of manner is the natural tribute due to superiority of position ; how can we say with any truth that we preserve the spirit of respect, when we refuse to acknowledge by outward signs the existence of such superiority ?

¹ St. John viii. 38-59.

In this so-called age of reason, the amount of unreason which we meet with is certainly very singular. Respect, we must all own, can only be testified by outward signs. It is very well to say we feel it, but if we do not show it, it is as if it did not exist. And the perception of relative position is recognized by every one to be the test of good breeding. A duchess who thrusts herself uninvited into the presence of her Sovereign is felt to be vulgar and ill-bred. No elegance of manner, or of dress, can atone for the ignorance of relative position which such an act indicates; whilst, on the other hand, the peasant girl who pays the respect to the duchess which her superiority of station demands, is well-bred—her cotton dress, and her homely language notwithstanding. The rule holds good even in reverse cases. The prince who forgets that he is a prince, and allows the person with whom he associates to take liberties with him, may be liked for his good-nature, but will be considered wanting in perfect gentlemanly feeling. There is no real courtesy in ignoring differences of relative position, because all well-bred persons are desirous of recognizing them; and a lady who refuses to accept the precedence which her rank gives her, makes us just as uncomfortable as one who claims it when it does not belong to her. And so far almost all persons perhaps will agree in allowing that the recognition of relative position is of importance in education; but how few are there who trouble themselves to reason further, so as to perceive that this recognition is a great moral safeguard, a check upon presumption and conceit on the one hand, and a support to rightful self-confidence,

and even to the strict performance of duty, on the other.

Society is composed of innumerable wheels, all working simultaneously, but stopped, when necessary, by cogs. Relative position is one of these cogs. Without it, youthful energy, natural talent, physical power—all great engines of movement and progress—would rush on, showing no consideration for other equally important engines, and by going beyond their mark, would, in the end, mar the very work for which they were intended.

It is not difficult, for instance, to imagine the confusion which would ensue if every person who had made a discovery, or formed a scheme likely to be beneficial to society, was able to discuss and thrust it forward at all seasons and in all society; if he might treat his superiors as his equals, show no deference to their opinions, and insist upon being attended to without consideration for other subjects which might have a claim upon public attention.

A never-ending conflict, a perpetual jar would be the result of such a power; and yet the individual proposing the scheme might have right on his side; that is to say, he might really be able to benefit society, and be perfectly sincere in his wish to do so. People often think it very hard when they find obstacles put in their way by etiquettes, formalities, proprieties; and no doubt these may be carried to an absurd extent, but the schemes which they have so much at heart would find many more obstacles without them; for, in fact, it is the very existence of these same rules and proprieties which enables any of us to carry out any scheme. And for this reason.

The work of the world must be carried on by a variety of agents. No man can do everything that is required for his business or his profession himself: he must trust, in a great degree, to the actions of others. But it is impossible for him to be assured of the fitness of the person he is compelled to employ; on the contrary, he is continually obliged to make use of those whom he knows to be decidedly unfit. If a thorough mental and moral examination could be made of all persons employed in the army, the navy, in lawyers' offices, in domestic service, in any situation, indeed, involving responsibility, and only those were chosen who were found to be fully competent for the duties they were called upon to undertake, in all probability not more than one-tenth of the persons now usefully employed, would remain in their present places. But how is it that the work of life is carried on by such inadequate instruments? It is owing in a very great degree to the recognition of relative position. Persons who would naturally be troublesome, self-sufficient, blundering, are kept in their proper place, and taught to perform their part rightly, by the check which is put upon them by the necessity of acknowledging differences of position. Others, on the contrary, who are timid, ignorant, self-distrustful, who have no confidence in their own judgment, and would be afraid to decide the questions which come before them if left to themselves, yet learn unconsciously what they are to do, and how they are to behave, by the support and guidance afforded through the medium of the same social distinctions. Differences of station, whether arising from birth, civil authority, age, talent, or from whatever cause, are, in fact, con-

stantly educating and training us, so that we may work harmoniously together, not interfering with or encroaching upon each other's privileges. They are the landmarks of society, and if we remove them, society will become a chaos.

So very true all this is. Why should any one take the trouble to repeat it?

Simply because the one place in which this necessary training for social life can be most easily and effectually carried on, is the one place where it is most generally neglected.

God has in His Wisdom cast every man's life into certain different moulds, one mould being intended to fit into the other, like the Indian boxes which we sometimes meet with, each distinct in itself, yet all, together, forming one whole. Home is the innermost of these moulds, it is intended to fit into the mould of social life, and this again is to fit into the mould of national or political life. And for the furtherance of this intention, our home life is so constituted, that in it we may, as children, practise on a small scale those duties which will enable us rightly to act our part, when we are called to enter upon a larger sphere. There is absolute superiority in the parents, a secondary superiority in other relations—in governesses or tutors, or in elder brothers and sisters; and a superiority, apart from position and education, arising from delegated authority, and from age, in nurses and servants. And in each of these cases, external signs of respect are naturally due, modified according to the relative position of the parties claiming them.

But do we find upon examination that home life is

really thus made use of as a school in which children may be taught the duty, and the importance of recognizing relative position.

The idea that respect is due to servants, because of their superiority in age, will probably seem exaggerated; yet St. Paul places a child only on a level with a servant, for he says: "Now, I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all."¹

The courtesy, therefore, of equality at least, is the servant's due. But how do we find that children are allowed to speak to servants? The embryo masters and mistresses issue their commands in a tone of authority, which is as destructive to goodwill as it is offensive to Christian feeling; and this want of respect shown to inferiors is carried upwards through all the relations of life, till it reaches the parents. Or rather it begins with the parents, and then descends. It is their training which gives the first lessons in the impertinence and insolence that society so severely punishes. How few are there who would not think it a severe suggestion, that their children ought never to be allowed to go in or out of a room before them, or sit when they themselves are standing, or interrupt them when they are speaking! How many would be surprised if they were told that they were doing their children a moral injury, by allowing them to ring the bell when they choose, to sit in a lounging attitude, and occupy the most comfortable seat in the room, to appear at the dinner table late without an apology, to help themselves to whatever they like, without thought for their elders.

¹ Gal. iv. 1.

And yet all these things must be attended to, if the children are ever to be fitted for social life. They must then recognize that age and station have claims upon their self-restraint; and if they do not, society—by no means as lenient as a mother—will *taboo* them. Or again, in regard to that most delicate, and yet most intangible test of respect—the tone of the voice—will not the generality of mothers think it a very severe doctrine, that from the earliest infancy, a child should be gently checked when it gives way to an off-hand tone of equality, even though there may be no actual rudeness? It was said by a most wise mother, “Whatever liberties you take with your brothers and sisters, my dear, you will take none with me;” and her son, at forty years of age, paid her the same tender deference which he had learnt when he was a boy of fourteen. This question of voice and manner has become infinitely important to us now, when we have thrown off the ceremonious politeness of our grandfathers and grandmothers, in conversation, and have scarcely any other outward mode of showing our respect. And we are all keenly alive to it. We shrink from what is called the free and easy tone of a colony; we dislike going into a shop where we know that we shall be addressed familiarly; we are provoked with our servants when they answer us shortly; we draw back from a new acquaintance who talks to us in the tone of an old friend. The only case in which we ignore it is with children. They may speak rudely, interrupt incessantly, repeat our words, put themselves in our way, disturb our occupations, and we never think of checking them.

And having thus educated them in disrespect in their homes, we are surprised to find that when they enter society, or are placed in situations of responsibility, they make themselves disagreeable, and have so little perception of the difference due to station and age, that they mar their really good intentions by acting without tact; and do what they have to do so awkwardly, that they often give offence where they most desire to please, and are perhaps at last pronounced unfit for their post by the very persons who were most desirous to become their friends.

Good-nature and want of tact are continually found in the same character, and we may sometimes have been pained with ourselves for being so annoyed with the latter, as to be inclined to overlook the former. But we really are not much to blame in this case. Want of tact is, generally speaking, as much a moral fault, as the absence of good-nature. It is almost always coupled with a forgetfulness of the claims or the restraints arising from relative position. To thrust kindnesses upon strangers, without any apology for the liberty, may be very good-natured, but it shows great want of tact, because it disregards the fact that society does not permit such familiarity. That offensive kind of good-nature, which exhibits itself under the form of patronage, is of the same character. The person offering it may have the kindest intentions, but by taking it for granted that some superiority of position sets him at liberty to overlook the ordinary etiquettes of society, he shows a want of tact which neutralizes his goodwill, and creates a cause of offence.

We are all more or less inclined to spoil very

young children in this special point of education, the knowledge of relative position. It amuses us so much to see the little creatures aping the manners of their elders, that we cannot bring ourselves to correct them. They are our playthings, and we think it hard that we may not amuse ourselves with them. And so the little fellow of four years old is brought forward to talk and repeat verses, and thrust himself upon the attention of visitors, till he becomes, first, the forward schoolboy, and then the "intolerably disagreeable man;" and the sweet little girl is allowed to chatter to gentlemen, who talk about her bright eyes and her glossy curls, and beg her to kiss them, till she becomes the vain, self-conscious, affected girl, and ultimately ends in "that odious flirt" whom no sensible man would venture to marry.

Alas! for human selfishness!

"Manners makyth man."¹ Not *manner*—not mere external polish—but the recognition, by the intellect and the heart, of those duties arising from relative position, which are as much moral obligations as the laws that enforce honesty and purity.

But this outward deference and respect, when insisted upon by parents, is supposed to stand in the way of the free play of natural affection. Children, it is thought, will not love their parents unless they are allowed to be what is called perfectly free with them; or, in other words, unless they are allowed to be rude to them.

If this be so, then the appointments of God in His government of the world are contradictory to each other; for, unquestionably, there does exist a

¹ The Winchester and New College motto.

strong natural affection between parents and children, and unquestionably; also, there does exist a very stringent obligation to pay outward respect to elders and superiors. If the former is the dictate of nature, so is the latter of reason; for, as Bishop Butler remarks, though in reference to another subject, "the relations being known, the obligations to such (reverence) are obligations of reason, arising out of those relations themselves."¹ The idea that absolute ease, by which is understood absolute familiarity, is essential to the perfection of love, is, in fact, one of those delusions by which men are led astray, because they prefer to listen to the voice of their own low and selfish inclinations, rather than to that of reason and experience. Reverence involves restraint; restraint is, in our present condition, disagreeable to us; therefore we persuade ourselves that it is inconsistent with our highest happiness, which is to be found in perfect love.

But let us look into the truth of this assertion. What is love? Where, in its highest degree, is it to be found? There is an answer which will rise at once to our lips: He alone who is Omniscient knows whether it comes also from our hearts. The love of God is the most perfect form of love.

But the feeling of love, when directed towards God, is, it will be said, something totally distinct from the same feeling when directed towards man.

That is strange! There is a History which we all know. It tells of One who, owning Himself to be God, yet dwelt among men, recognizing all the relationships and sympathies of man;—who was obedient

¹ Butler's Analogy, Part II. chap. i.

to His parents; tender in His care for His mother; who wept at the grave of His dead friend; who suffered His most cherished disciple to lean upon His breast; who looked forward to the time of reunion and of mutual participation in future glory, as one of the bright hopes which was to strengthen Him in His hour of agony.

What was the feeling awakened towards Him? He was God. Was He loved with a love totally distinct from the love of man? Or was that love the purest, highest, noblest, most satisfying, most enduring of all affections—a love which, like the Nature of Him to whom it was addressed, did not cease to be human because it was Divine, but blending the sense of perfect sympathy and comprehension with the most exalted reverence, suffered the heart to pour itself forth without check; and to repose, even in the consciousness of its infirmity, knowing that—

“ The Lord who dwells on high
Knows all, yet loves us better than He knows ”?

Indeed, indeed, we do ourselves a grievous wrong when we acquiesce in the assertion that Divine and human love are not only different in degree, but different in kind. There is no such essential distinction between the love which we feel for our fellow creatures, and that which we are permitted to offer to our Redeemer, as will admit of our giving our whole hearts in one form to a human friend, and in the other form to God. There is but one *highest*, one *all*. And if reverence is an inseparable element in the perfection of Divine love; then must respect, which is only a lower form of reverence, be an essential element in the perfection of human love.

Love without respect, what is it? We must turn to the miserable history of man's selfishness and degradation for the answer. What sins, what cruelties, what heart-sickening wretchedness, what aberrations of reason, may not be laid to the charge of love, under all its forms—when existing (if, indeed, it can truly be said to exist,—if the feeling which claims the name is not rather some mockery and shadow of love)—apart from respect!

Love with respect, who may tell its comfort and its rest? As we journey through life, and learn by bitter experience to look for weakness and want of judgment, if not for openly allowed faults, even in the wisest and best of men, we must at times long to return to those blissful days of ignorance, when all persons older than ourselves were supposed to be actuated by right motives, and to be guided by sound discretion. Even now we linger fondly on the characters of those we love; we speak of their virtues, their struggles, their aims; but there is something wanting even in our praise. We admire them less for what they are than for what they strive to be, and our strongest feeling cannot expend itself upon them. We love them most fondly, most truly, and constantly, but there is a power of love within us which can never be satisfied by any human affection, because the one element of complete reverence is wanting, and without it love can never be perfect.

But it was not so in youth. Then we had had no disappointments; our respect was without misgiving, without alloy; and the love we felt was of the nature of that full confiding affection which

must be the joy of the angels in Heaven, and which we pray, hereafter, to be permitted to share.

This highest form of human love is, however, inseparable from respect of manner. God has given to every human being—to the child as well as to the man—an instinctive perception of the claims of relative position; this perception bringing with it the consciousness of moral obligation. The child cannot escape from it. It knows that it ought not to be disrespectful to its parent, just as naturally as it knows that it ought not to steal, or to commit murder; though, unfortunately, this particular form of moral consciousness is, in too many cases, weakened by the education received in infancy. Still, the knowledge remains: it is never entirely eradicated; and when the child, as it grows up, sees and feels that it is not compelled to acknowledge this relation, in its outward behaviour, its respect for its parent is lessened; and, as an unavoidable consequence, its love is lessened also. And, yet more—there is in the very act of outward respect, something which, except where it is an actual mockery, engenders the inward feeling;—this feeling being, indeed, not the homage due to moral worth, but that which belongs to relative position; and which, as it has before been said, is a natural and moral claim. The “divinity that doth hedge a king,” is not only evidenced to the senses, but the consciousness of it is increased, by the pomp and pageantry which surround him. And so, the respect which children pay to their parents, not only marks their inward feeling, but actually strengthens it.

This is seen more clearly as years go on. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, must by degrees reach an equal level as regards moral and intellectual worth and power. The sons and daughters may, indeed, surpass, and in fact they very often do surpass, their parents in these respects; and, moreover, rise above them in social position. But the superiority of nature can be affected by no changes. The father is the father still, the mother is the mother; and the child who has been taught to be respectful to his parents in infancy, will continue to be so, though he may have risen to be the titled general, or the world-famous philosopher, and they may have remained in their original obscurity.

It can be no external homage which is given in such a case, for society does not require it. The nobleman or the philosopher may hold his place and practically ignore his parents, and the world will think little the less of him. But God's laws, God's ordinances, are immutable. He has said, "Honour thy father and thy mother." He has instituted a natural connection between the relationship and the respect which He commands; and this connection can never cease to be felt by any person who, from infancy, has been taught to acknowledge it. Love may change with circumstances, because the foundations upon which it is based may change; but the respect consequent upon the habitual recognition of natural superiority of position, must remain as long as the relation itself remains; and being thus unchangeable, it tends to keep alive, to nourish and strengthen, the feeling of love. The man who might almost have forgotten, or at least ceased to

regard, his father, if he had been allowed to treat him with unseemly familiarity, is compelled by the very force of habit to consider his opinion of importance, when he has always been accustomed to own that his father stands above him. The young girl who, surrounded by friends of her own age, and carried away by the whirl of gaiety, might chalk out her own career without consideration for her mother's feelings, turns instinctively to that mother for approbation, and cannot be satisfied without it, when she has been taught from infancy to show her deference.

All forms—forms of respect as well as of religion—are indeed the moulds into which feeling is to be poured. The feeling may, for a time, exist apart from the form; the form may, for a time, exist where there is no feeling. But the voice of nature, and the teaching of God in revelation, alike teach us that, in such cases, the existence both of form and spirit will be short-lived and imperfect. Man's soul and his body may be separated, and the soul may live still, looking forward to the day of resurrection and reunion. But human feelings know no such resurrection, and the spirit apart from the form will fade and die. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

CHAPTER XV.

TRUTH.

WE have been hitherto considering the duties of parents towards their children. The duty of the child towards its parent has been summed up in the virtues of obedience and respect. But children have many other duties towards many other persons, and no education can be perfect which does not teach them to fulfil those duties. How, then, are these lessons to be enforced?

Now, it might naturally be supposed that, in treating a subject of this kind, we should begin with the consideration of that duty to God, as revealed to us in the Bible, which includes all forms and degrees of duty to man; but if we examine the training of God given by nature, we shall probably be led to own that such teaching is not strictly according to His appointment.

The little child of a year and a half old who disobeys its mother, can perfectly comprehend that it has done wrong, but cannot possibly understand the scheme of salvation. Obedience, therefore, must be taught, before definite religious truths can be entered upon. In nature, as well as in grace, the Law must precede the Gospel. This does not by any means

imply that instruction in religion must not accompany elementary moral teaching, for without it moral teaching will ultimately fail of its object; but it does mean that the primary ideas of morality are stamped by nature upon the child's mind, and are absolutely perfect at once, whilst the primary ideas of revealed religion are acquired as the mind develops. No amount of teaching can make the idea of Truth more clear to a child's intellect than it is by nature; but Faith is a complex idea, which can only be received and comprehended by degrees; and therefore, to wait till the child can understand and exercise Faith before we teach it the obligation of Truth, is to put aside God's system of education, and to adopt one of our own. And upon further consideration, we shall find also, that education, so far as it is put in man's power, has no means of directly enforcing any of those virtues which belong essentially to revealed religion. We may advise, and warn, and encourage, and punish; but no counsel and no admonition can produce in the child's mind the feelings of faith and love. Those deep principles of human action lie hidden from us. God alone can set them in motion; though He devolves upon us the teaching of the great truths, such as "His love toward us in Christ Jesus," which are calculated to arouse them. Neither can we by any direct effort make a child humble-minded or unselfish—because outward actions, apart from the spirit in which they are performed, do not constitute humility and unselfishness; and it is only over the outward act that we have any immediate control. We may, for instance, compel a child to take an inferior position, or,

for the benefit of others, to make a sacrifice of some cherished wish; but if there is a proud feeling in the one case, or a grudging irritation in the other, the actions themselves cease to be either humble or unselfish. It is true, indeed, that we are called upon constantly to enforce such outward acts, apart from the inward spirit, because, if we fail to do so, the sinful habit of mind will be strengthened by indulgence in it; but the good we do can be only negative, and the child will never be really humble and unselfish, until the principles of those graces are, through God's mercy, implanted in its heart. There are, however, some moral actions, which have, as it were, an independent existence, distinct from the spirit which actuates them, and over these we may in education exert a direct power. Such are acts of obedience, truth, and justice. Obedience cannot be disobedience. Truth cannot be a lie. A just action cannot be unjust. This is evident upon the slightest consideration. If, for instance, we could suppose any individual to be absolutely just in all his actions, and absolutely true in word and deed during the whole course of his life; it would be a contradiction to say that the actions were not just and true, because the spirit in which they were performed was not that of justice and truth. The bad motive, or feeling, could not make the just act unjust; or the truth which was spoken falsehood. The actions in themselves would be good, though the man who committed them might be bad; and *vice versa*—a lie is a lie, though spoken to save a man's life; and injustice is injustice, though committed from a wish to do a kindness.

It is in these cases that we are permitted, when

judging of an act in itself undoubtedly wrong, to separate in a measure the offender from the offence; to condemn the latter, whilst, according to circumstances, we deal, it may be, leniently with the former.

And it is because of this peculiar character of the three virtues just mentioned that they must be considered first in treating of education. We have no power of directly dealing with a child's mind, and if we make the attempt we shall probably only do mischief. He alone who created man in His own Image can restore that Image when it is defaced. But the particular virtues which have been mentioned, having, what has been called, an independent existence, may be enforced less cautiously, since we may be sure that the practice of the outward act is good, whatever may be the condition of the heart. Of obedience we have already spoken; and justice, so far as it can be practised by children, is so inseparably connected with truth, that in cherishing the one we necessarily cherish the other. A perfectly true mind must be a perfectly just mind. What, then, is the best method we may adopt in order to make a child truthful? Before entering upon this question, it will be necessary to examine more particularly into the nature of truth.

Now, it is often asserted that some persons are truthful, others untruthful, by nature; but it may be doubted whether this is a true statement of the case. The sense of the moral obligation of truth is, we know, in certain individuals so strong that the least suspicion of untruthfulness makes them wretched; and if ever under the influence of strong temptation led into a

falsehood, they are miserable till they have confessed it. Their word may always be relied upon; they dislike exaggeration; they see very quickly through pretence; they are inclined to look even with uncharitable scorn upon others who are not like themselves blest with the love of truth. Such characters, though not always very agreeable, are by far the most satisfactory to deal with. Whatever may be their natural faults, this truthfulness may always be made use of to correct them. They will, in fact, by God's grace, correct themselves, for when the love of truth exists very strongly, there is as earnest a desire to avoid self-deception as any other kind of deception.

But because there are some in whom the love of truth is strongly developed, it by no means follows that there may or can be others who have a natural love of falsehood. On the contrary, it seems, when we look into the question, that the love of truth is part of that original nature which we derived from God; and which, though it may be marred and distorted, cannot be obliterated in any human being. The most false man that lives will disapprove of falsehood in others; and all men, as a general rule, will speak truth when they have no motive for speaking untruth. If we could suppose any man to have a natural love of falsehood, for its own sake, he must have lost all sense of moral fitness, of the relation of one act to another. He would be unable to live with his fellow-creatures, for his theory and his practice would be totally opposed to theirs. What they might think right, he would endeavour to think wrong; what they might know to be a truth, he

would strive to disbelieve. And even if such a case could be supposed, yet the very fact of its being an effort to him thus to differ from other men, would be a proof that the sense of truth still lingered in his heart. If it were no effort to him, then he would be self-deceived. He might believe a falsehood, for we all more or less believe falsehoods, but he himself might still retain the love of truth. The idolater who bows down before his wooden god, believes a falsehood; but it is not a necessary consequence that he himself should be untruthful, or have pleasure in untruthfulness. Men take great delight in fiction, but it is only whilst it confesses itself to be fiction, and therefore ceases to be an untruth. When a book professes to be true, and then is discovered to be fiction, the interest ceases, or at least is only kept up by the truth which it still retains; that is to say, the accordance between what is described, and what we feel must under similar circumstances have taken place. De. Foe's "History of the Plague" is a striking exemplification of this statement. Every one who reads it, believing it to be what it professes to be—the statement of an eyewitness of the scenes recorded—must experience a diminution of interest when told that it is not so. But after a while the interest will in a great degree be revived, because the description of what must have happened is seen to be so wonderfully accurate. It is the sense of truth which even in this case gives the pleasure. So it is again with historical novels; and even in works of fiction which lie quite beyond the domain of our present senses, and our present experience—fairy tales, for instance,—the appeal to our interest still

lies in the perception of truth. Fairies are always represented as human in their passions and their tastes, and because they are thus, as the saying is, "true to nature," we like to follow them in their disguise, and are amused instead of shocked at the new physical powers attributed to them.

And if we look into the Bible we shall find that this innate perception of and desire for truth is the basis of all the appeals made to man's obedience, and all the commands laid down for his guidance. The Lord is the God of truth;¹ it is one of His attributes. His counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.² His desire for man is, that he should have truth in his inward parts.³ The promise given to the Jews was, that the lip of truth should be established for ever,⁴ and it would seem that the complaints made of their falsehood are more numerous than the injunctions given them to observe truth, because the very moral nature which God had bestowed upon them, and the very necessities of their earthly existence, enjoined truth upon them with a power which nothing but madness or blindness could fail to recognize. To prove from the Bible that truth is considered by God the foundation of morality would, indeed, be simply to quote passages from the opening Book of Genesis, to the closing Book of St. John's Revelation.

And yet it may be said that there are, in the Bible, instances of deceit and falsehood upon which no censure is passed. Is it possible that God can have approved of them?

¹ Jer. x. 10.

² Isaiah xxv. 1.

³ Psal. li. 6.

⁴ Prov. xii. 19.

In answer to this, it must be remembered that the Bible is, in the main, a history of facts. Jacob deceived his father: that is a fact. The Bible does not profess to tell us what Jacob ought to have done, but what he did. And God did not interfere to punish the patriarch by any supernatural punishment, any more than He interferes to punish us. He left him to the natural course of His moral government, according to which deceit and falsehood must bring suffering. No one can carefully read the account of Jacob's subsequent life without owning that the sorrowful confession wrung from him at the close of his earthly pilgrimage, "few and evil have the days of the years of my life been,"¹ may be traced back to the offence which caused him to incur his brother's wrath, and made him an exile from his home for so large a portion of his life.

A few other instances there are of things done and said untruly, but in no one case were they commanded or praised by God because of their untruth. Rahab, by uttering a falsehood, saved the lives of the spies sent by Joshua to view Jericho. In the Epistle to the Hebrews she is mentioned approvingly, but it is on account of her faith; and it must, moreover, be remembered that actions having their origin in the overpowering instinct to save life cannot be judged by ordinary rules. They lead to questions of casuistry, which are most difficult to determine, and cannot at all affect the general statement that God in revelation, as in nature, requires "truth in

¹ Gen. xlvii. 9.

the inward parts" as the groundwork of all goodness.

If we would yet more thoroughly be convinced of this, let us consider, for one moment, not only the denunciations upon those who are guilty of that most aggravated form of deceit which consists in attempting to deceive God by honouring Him with the lips while the heart is far from Him; but the two cases which stand distinct from all others as instances of falsehood told directly to God.

The name of Cain is handed down to us as that of the first man who dared to answer his Maker with a lie. "The Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?"¹ Cain was cursed—for murder indeed, rather than for a lie; but it was the lie which aggravated and intensified the murder, because it showed that his was no heart in which repentance could be awakened. And Cain's punishment was "greater than he could bear."

That lie immediately followed man's fall. There was another lie of the same character,—told, that is, in direct defiance of God's Omniscience,—which immediately followed man's Redemption. The story of Ananias and Sapphira inspires a most salutary awe in a young mind, yet perhaps few at once grasp the real intensity of the sin, or understand why it received such a fearful punishment.

The moral government of God in this world deals immediately and visibly with the relations between man and man. Offences against our fellow creatures are

¹ Gen. iv. 9.

witness to falsehood, is virtually to overlook the existence of that attribute, and thus to deny His very Being.

Now, we have already seen that God has been pleased to educate mankind in the recognition and practice of truth, by the natural penalties which He has attached to falsehood. We have seen also that in certain cases He has interfered supernaturally in order to testify to the supreme majesty of truth. But when we look into revelation we shall find that it is less by the punishment of falsehood, than by the perpetual recall to truth, that the overwhelming authority of the latter is enforced.

There is no distinction in this respect between the training of Jews and Christians, for difference of mental condition makes no difference in the perception of truth. The little child understands what is meant by truth, as perfectly as the great philosopher. What both alike need is to be taught its imperative authority; and this, not because the human mind would naturally fail to recognize that authority, but because being a fallen, a distorted nature, it allows itself to be blinded by sophistry and self-interest. Truth is, in fact, in the Bible, the standard to which everything is brought, the test by which it is measured. The commands and the declarations of God are to be obeyed and believed because they are truth. As the Psalmist says: "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth. Thou art near, O Lord, and all Thy commandments are truth."¹

¹ Psalm cxix. 142, 151.

punished either directly or indirectly, by them. The punishment follows the offence on the principle of cause and effect; and a lie told to man is followed by the contempt of man. But offences against God are not, as a general rule, thus punished. Absence of faith, or of reverence, or humility, cannot be brought under human jurisdiction. A person may be guilty of such sins, and the world will know nothing of them; or, if it does know, it will not notice them. Unless blotted out for Christ's sake, they are reserved for a more strict tribunal, a more impartial and a more awful Judge. But there is one offence against God which men are compelled to notice,—perjury. If this were overlooked, the sense of truth which keeps society together and enables us to carry on our dealings with each other would soon be obliterated.

The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was an aggravated offence of this character. The Apostles, visibly gifted with the power of the Holy Ghost, were, even in the sight of their fellow creatures, the representatives of God. The lie told to them, was a lie told directly to God. It was an outrage upon one of His essential attributes. The ordinary punishment of a lie would, therefore, have been wholly inadequate to express its guilt, and to vindicate the insulted majesty of the Almighty. Death was its due penalty, and death was inflicted instantly: as in like cases on record, when an appeal has been made to God, and a lie has been spoken, death also has followed. Men at once recognize such a punishment as just, and why? Because truth is the very foundation stone of the attributes of God, and to attempt to make Him the

And this will give us a very important suggestion with regard to the education of children.—No amount of correction or of warning will train a child in truthfulness, unless truth is the recognized standard of morality amongst those with whom it is brought up. We cannot deceive children upon this subject. They know what is true just as well as we do; and so far as we ourselves are untrue in word or deed, so far will the children, who are to be guided, turn a deaf ear, to our injunctions. The caution may appear unnecessary. Falsehood and deceit are so universally despised, it would seem that no one really guided by religious principles would be guilty of them. Yet it is scarcely too much to assert, that to be perfectly true is the most difficult task which a Christian can set before himself. It must be, if we only allow ourselves to think for one moment. Perfect truth is one of God's attributes. Who then can attain unto it?

And what is more—children are truer in their instincts and feelings, and even in their words and actions, than their elders. They will, indeed, be guilty of more direct open offences against truth; they will scruple less to tell direct lies; but they do not understand the false reasonings, which tempt men, even by the very keenness of their intellects, to deceive both themselves and others. If we examine the mode in which the Jews are addressed by Moses, and by our Blessed Lord, we shall see at once the advance made in sophistry, by a nation who had passed from the stage of childhood to that of thought and so-called civilization. The Israelites in the wilderness are addressed as dis-

obedient, obstinate, stiff-necked, faithless, but we never hear of them as deceivers. They lived too immediately in the Presence, and before the Majesty of God, to venture to reason away His commands. They might neglect their parents, and dishonour them, but they would not then have dared to do so, as they did in later times, under the pretence that they were making an offering to God. What says our Blessed Lord to the Jews of His day? "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. . . . When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not." ¹ And the prophecy which foretells of the sins of the latter days, especially warn us that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." ²

It is a matter for very grave thought with us all. For, inasmuch as the professed aim of the men of this age is to search after truth, so we may be sure that there will be very many who seek for it in the ways of falsehood. Truth and error, sincerity and deceit, walk side by side through the world. Wherever the one is to be found, the other will quickly follow;—error wearing the garb of truth—deceit arraying itself in the mantle of sincerity. And how shall we distinguish between them?

Reality before God! His words taken in their natural sense, and acted upon according to their plain meaning. Reality with ourselves! No tampering with secret faults: no turning away the eye from a

¹ St. John viii. 44, 45.

² 2 Tim. iii. 13.

suspected sin. Reality with our fellow creatures! No striving to appear, no wish even to be thought what we are not; nothing done from form, or fashion, or fear of giving offence. It is a hard, hard task, but we may not, we dare not, put it aside. For our soul's sake—for the sake of the Master whom we desire to serve—for the sake of the children whom we would fain train up for his glory—we *must be real*. If we are, then will God lead us into all truth. If we are not, the very lessons of honour and sincerity which we give will rise up against us in condemnation; “our children themselves being our judges.”

This, then, is the first desideratum,—the imperative necessity for all those who desire to foster the sense of truth in the young minds entrusted to them. As God is absolutely true Himself, as He appeals to truth, as He insists upon it and enforces it, so in our measure must we be true; so must we insist and enforce truth. And when we have fully acknowledged this necessity, and asked God to enable us to act upon it, we may then proceed to inquire what means may most safely be adopted to check the tendency to deceit and untruthfulness which, from various causes, will more or less exhibit itself in almost all children, at some period of their education.

The expression, “from various causes,” has been used advisedly, because, unless we remember that the perception and the instinct of truth are imperishable in the human breast, we shall be likely to make as grievous mistakes in correcting a child who tells us a falsehood, as a physician does who treats the symptoms of the disease for the disease itself. If the

love of truth abstractedly exists in every one, without exception, then the child who tells falsehoods does so from some hidden motive, or feeling; and, until we have discovered what this hidden motive power is, we shall never cure the evil habit.

One very common source of untruthfulness in children is want of moral courage. We will suppose that from this cause a child tells us a falsehood. There are two ways in which we may deal with the case.

We may say, "you have committed a great sin; and have acted most dishonourably; I cannot again put confidence in your word; I am extremely angry with you, and I shall punish you severely." And the child will go from our presence, humbled and possibly repentant; but also extremely frightened; and the next time she is required to exercise moral courage, she will find it even more difficult than before, because her fear of us is increased. In her alarm she will, perhaps, be again tempted to lie, and the reproof and the punishment will be yet sterner. The fear will become greater; the sin will be repeated. The child will be gradually acquiring the character of an habitual liar; and in all probability will be sent away from home, to some person who it is hoped may exercise over her an influence for good. But her character precedes her. She enters upon her new sphere with the reputation of untruthfulness, and of course her word is distrusted. She knows this, and her moral energies are weakened. She is depressed and unhappy, and, as an inevitable result, naughty. Then she is scolded, then frightened. Then she tells a falsehood to save herself from punishment; and

so it goes on. What is the hope of strengthening the love of truth under such a system?

But suppose, having discovered, or even only suspecting, that the falsehood is the result of moral cowardice, we take a different course; suppose we speak very gravely—we cannot speak too gravely—of the sin of lying; suppose we show how it aggravates all other sins—how it tends to destroy confidence, and how heinous it is in God's sight; and then, instead of saying: "I am extremely angry," say, "I am extremely pained; I must punish the offence more than I should any other, because it is in itself so grievous—and you may be sure that I always shall punish it; therefore, if you wish to avoid punishment you must be perfectly open and true. Confess what you have done that is wrong, and you will find me always ready to forgive, and help you to do better: try to hide it by a falsehood, and I shall be obliged to punish you double. And now, having given you this warning, I feel confident that the offence will not be repeated, and I shall trust to your word, because I do not think you will pain me by trying to deceive me a second time."

There will be humiliation, and probably repentance, in this case as in the former; but the child's feelings will be softened and hopeful. There may be punishment to bear, but her mind will acquiesce in it as just. Having learnt what it was which tempted her to offend, she will be the better able to guard against it. And if, whenever occasion offers, she is encouraged and assisted to speak truth, whatever may be the consequence, she will by degrees find her moral courage strengthened; whilst the dread of a lie will

become so keen, that at length it will be a greater effort to tell a falsehood and escape punishment, than to speak truth and bear it.

For it may be remarked that pain is by the very instinct of nature attached to falsehood. A child may give way to pride, vanity, passion, selfishness, injustice, and may be sorry and ashamed of the sin when it is pointed out; but there is no such instinctive perception of guilt as there is in the case of falsehood. Some children, indeed, have this perception in a more marked degree than others; but all have it more or less; and it is by working upon it that we may hope so to strengthen the love of truth, as to make it an absolute necessity of the child's nature both to speak and act truly under all circumstances.

And when this necessity is created, we shall have paved the way for another most important phase of truth—that of seeing and owning it. Moral cowardice, for the most part, takes one form in childhood, another in mature age. A child knows what is true, but is afraid to say it. The grown-up man fears what is true, and is afraid to see it. Volumes might be written on the consequences of this weakness—volumes full of the history of personal self-deceit, family distrust, and that unhappy expediency, which, ultimately, bring ruin. The world calls these things by harsh names, because it suffers by them. It may be well that it should do so; for, if it looked upon them leniently, society could not long hold together. But God, we may hope and believe, judges them more mercifully, and sees in them, not wilful, deliberate sin, but the infirmity of

moral cowardice. Only, as the children whom we educate must live in the world, and be judged and punished by it, before they receive their sentence from God; it will be a work of charity in us to endeavour to save them from that which may, one day, prove so terrible a snare.

Never let us be afraid to tell children the truth. This is the general rule; the exceptions can be but few. If they are to take medicine, let them know that it is medicine. If they are to suffer pain, say so. If they are to be deprived of some anticipated pleasure, do not let them delude themselves, up to the last moment, by expecting it. And, if sorrow is coming upon the family,—illness, poverty, separation, do not let us attempt to dress up the trial in any false garb. Own it to be what it is; and then teach those who are to bear it to encounter it with the strength which God will give. We must all have experienced, more or less, the confidence—the sense of power and resolution—which results from having looked an evil bravely in the face;—having dared it, as it were, to its worst. That done, every slight alleviation is a real gain. We may not disturb ourselves about a trial which, in the Providence of God, may be prevented; but, having reason to expect it, we may calmly prepare ourselves to meet it, and leave the future in God's Hands. This courage of truthfulness in those who have the care of children, operates most beneficially in the way of example, besides giving the young mind rest. Young people are so quick in perceiving when something is amiss, that they are scarcely ever to be deceived upon this point, though their imaginations will continually outrun reality.

It is possible to grow up, even from childhood, with a sense of insecurity, in the midst of apparent peace and prosperity; and, with this feeling, there must always be somewhat of distrust of those who try to throw a veil over the truth. There can be no rest with such a feeling. If the child has any force of character, there will be a determined search till truth is discovered and faced; if not, example will do its fatal work, and the parent, who deceived himself, will unconsciously educate his child upon the same principle; till the heirloom of moral cowardice, handed down from generation to generation, has brought the punishment which must inevitably be its consequence; and then the confession is made,—alas! too late—“if I had but been told the truth, and taught to face it, in childhood, the whole course of my life would have been different. Now I have sown delusion, and reaped disappointment. Then, I should have worked my way, in the face of difficulties, and, in the end, have conquered.”

People little think of all this, when they bring up their children with the one idea of saving them pain and making life happy. They say,—and that rightly,—that childhood and youth are the seasons for enjoyment; that trouble will come soon enough; that it is wrong to forecast evils ourselves. Most true—most worthy of attention; only, if things are based on a falsity, they will, ultimately, bring sorrow. Once give a young person, or even a child, the consciousness of having been wilfully misled, taught to build upon an unreal foundation, to expect what there was no reason to expect, and enjoyment is at an end. By one stroke, the charms of a home of

happiness become the mere trickery of the scene painter ; and the friends who made its delight, are the actors, who strangely represent reality, but have, in themselves, no affinity with the characters they portray. To give pain, to bear pain, to see painful facts, to look at painful sights, to put painful truths into plain words, are lessons which, if we do not learn in childhood from our parents and friends, God will inevitably teach us by the discipline of life.

They need but two cautions, though these are very needful. One is, not to confound the necessity of truth with coldness, or want of sympathy, or harsh judgment ; and the other, to guard it from exaggeration.

The most painful things may be said and borne well if softened by kindness. We may not hesitate to disappoint a child, or to speak of a trial which must be borne, but we must at the same time express our sorrow for the suffering we are inflicting.

And we must not confound truth with the exaggerations of temper, and suppose that we are giving needful warning or reproof when we are, in fact, merely giving way to our own hasty feelings. Faults and failings must be called by right names, but these may not always be such as we choose to apply to them. A child makes a mistake, and says unintentionally what is not true. Certainly, an untruth is a falsehood, and a person who tells a falsehood is a liar. But to call the child a liar is an exaggeration of terms which, if the matter were less grave, would border on the ludicrous. The reason of this is that "liar," in the sense in which it is generally used, implies the intention as well as the act of

lying. We choose to separate the two, and therefore, though literally true in our statement, we are actually untrue. No one has a right to affix to words a meaning which is not generally accepted, any more than he has a right to call a, b,—or b, c,—and then to be angry because his friends cannot understand him when he attempts to talk.

Wilful exaggerations of this character are most mischievous in the education of children. They are discovered at once, and resented as injustice, and then there is no hope of repentance and amendment.

But there are many other temptations besides moral cowardice which lead, in one form or another, to the violation of truth.

A vast number of persons are untruthful from vanity. They like to say things which will attract attention; they are fond of making themselves heroes and heroines. They dress up the world in which they live in a fancy dress, and try to see both others and themselves in a point of view which will create interest. So it is that, instead of repeating a statement simply, as it is made, they think it no harm to put "a hat on its head, and a stick in its hand," and send it into the world in a more attractive garb. Such persons will tell falsehoods, and persist in them with what appears the most deliberate effrontery, but they are not quite as wilfully untruthful as they seem to be. They half believe what they say. The fact of having said it gives it a kind of reality; and then they are obliged to defend themselves, and to repeat it, and that strengthens their belief, until at length they do quite think that it is true. And so they tell lies, in perfect good faith, and are scarcely at all con-

founded when the truth and the statement are put side by side, and shown to be inconsistent with each other. "They do not know how it is," they say, "but certainly they heard it. The person who told them may have been mistaken. It is strange how apt we all are to make mistakes. But certainly they heard it."

And some cases there are in which there is no such actual blindness; cases in which some personal feeling has led to exaggeration—to a distortion of words, a wilful misconception of meaning. Pride and temper are the incentives to falsehood; and even when the untruth is plainly brought home to the guilty person, pride and temper will frequently cause a persistence in it, even to absurdity. So, again, little meannesses, and petty jealousies, will lead to lies, and when they are discovered, the same spirit will tempt to petty evasions, by which the meaning of what has been asserted may be altered and evaded, and thus the shame of having been untrue escaped.

Prejudice is another, and perhaps the most fruitful of all incentives to falsehood; but it is the sin of mature years rather than of childhood. Grown-up persons tell lies from prejudice, just as children do from want of moral courage. They attribute motives, and the very instant they do this the probability is that they will assert what is not true. But children also have the tendency; we may hear them say, they are sure such a person did or said so and so, because he or she liked or disliked, or felt, or wished something which it is impossible the child should know anything about.

And so also envy and revenge will lead to falsehood,

and such instances, though they are more rare, are more flagrantly sinful ; but in all these cases—setting aside the absence of moral courage—we shall find the sin of untruthfulness more strongly developed in grown-up persons than in children.

Vanity, pride, temper, meanness, prejudice, when they exist unchecked in the human heart, are stronger at thirty than at thirteen ; and the falsehoods which proceed from them are therefore more glaring. Those which arise from the absence of moral courage would be more glaring also, if it were not that the stern discipline of the world converts the very weakness of a man's nature into a source of strength ; and the contempt which is poured upon untruthfulness makes him afraid to tell a lie.

Now, in order to guard against these manifold temptations to falsehood, it will be necessary always to bear in mind the guilt which attaches to the offence itself, apart from the motive which gave rise to it. We must, indeed, look narrowly into those motives, so that the temptation may be avoided for the future ; and we must be just, as well as severe, in our judgment, and not pass the same sentence of condemnation on the child who tells a falsehood from fear, as on one who commits the same offence from envy or spite. But a lie is a lie still ; and that which must be impressed upon the child is, that it is a sin unlike almost all other sins, inasmuch as it has a guilt of its own, apart from the motive which led to it, and therefore is to be abhorred, and consequently punished, for its own sake. We may feel very sorry for the timid child who has been led into an untruth ; we may think and speak leniently of the proud child

who could not bring herself to make a true confession ; but—we are not punishing timidity or pride, but a lie, and the punishment of the offence must be proportionably severe, even whilst we show the child that we can fully understand and make allowance for the feelings which led to it. Perhaps the strongest weapon to be used against untruthfulness—including in that word not only direct falsehood, but deceit and equivocation—is contempt ; for it is the weapon which God uses in nature. Contempt is the first feeling which springs up in the heart, when we are brought face to face with a lie. It is intuitive. We are conscious of it before we can reason upon it. The person who tells the lie, unless entirely hardened, is conscious of it himself, and self-contempt, as it is a natural, so it is a much more severe punishment than the contempt of others.

We must, then, always speak of falsehood abstractedly, as something utterly despicable ; and we may safely use the same tone when the offence is immediately brought before our notice. Only in that case we must take care to mark the distinction between the offence and the offender ; otherwise we run the risk of crushing a child's spirit, by rousing a sense of degradation which destroys the energy necessary for amendment. A really honourable child may, from some very strong temptation, be led into falsehood or deceit, and the sense of humiliation following upon the discovery will then be so keen, that if the personal contempt of others is added to its own self-reproach, the feeling will become that agony of a "wounded spirit," which "who can bear ?"

One rule, however, we may safely make, for it scarcely admits of an exception. A falsehood is never to go unpunished, whatever may have been the temptation which led to it, or however sincere may be the repentance which follows it. The sin exists as a sin in itself, and we may wisely say to a child, "I never overlook a lie." Of course, this does not include cases in which the falsehood is voluntarily confessed. The honourable act of confession must then be considered as neutralizing to a great extent the dishonourable act of untruthfulness.

In dealing with habitual falsehood the treatment must, of necessity, be different, and more severe, than when the offence is only, as it were, accidental. But even then we must never allow ourselves to speak so contemptuously as to create the idea that we have lost all confidence in the offender. The moment we do that we lose our influence. A child who knows that she is not trusted, and believed, will never have the heart to strive to make herself worthy of confidence.

And this creates a great difficulty in cases of deception and equivocation, as well as of actual falsehood. To know that a child is likely to deceive, and yet to act as though we gave her credit for sincerity, requires more circumspection and self-control than the generality of persons are capable of. Some are so indignant at the very idea of deception, that they pour down a torrent of wrath and contempt without pausing to inquire how far it is deserved, whilst others are by nature suspicious; and suspicion, more than anything, creates deceit. Young people who are watched and suspected, are driven into it.

Their simplest actions may, they know, be misconstrued, and therefore they try to conceal them. This is especially to be observed with regard to correspondence. Parents are naturally and rightly anxious about their daughters' correspondence, as it may become a matter of much importance, and a common theory (which is as true as most theories!) is, that daughters can have nothing to write which their parents may not see, and that if they have, it must be something wrong. All letters, therefore, are expected to be shown. And they are shown. And if the daughters have good principles, the results may be twofold; they will probably write and receive but few letters—in itself a very good result—and they will beg their young friends to be very careful what they say, and reserve a free correspondence for some time when they happen to be away from home, and know that they can have their letters to themselves. Is this being perfectly open? And yet these young girls may, by nature, abhor deceit.

But supposing the daughters not to be well principled, what is then the effect of this system of suspicion? Will any amount of watching and care prevent a wrong correspondence, if young persons are determined to carry it on? We need only appeal to general experience to prove the contrary. Or suppose that we can by such means check correspondence, can we also check the evil in the heart which gave rise to it, and which will surely work itself out in some other way?

Suspicion, we may be assured, never yet nourished truth in those already true, or checked it in those already untrue. Confidence, trust, the appeal to

the sense of honour which God has implanted in the hearts of all;—these are the means by which we may hope so to guard our children, by making them guard themselves, that our own watchfulness will be unnecessary.

When a daughter can go to her mother and say, “I have a letter, or part of a letter, which I do not wish to show,” the mother need have no fear of the contents of the letter. The same honourable feeling which led to the acknowledgment, will be a sufficient safeguard against any abuse of the confidence. Girls of twelve and thirteen must indeed be kept within strict limits in this matter, because they have not judgment enough to see the desirableness or undesirableness of the friendships they desire to cultivate. Their letters are for the most part a waste of time; but even with them—if we wish to make them thoroughly truthful—we must content ourselves with knowing to whom they write, and not be rigid in insisting upon always superintending the correspondence. They may have their little plans and schemes, perfectly innocent, but requiring some temporary secrecy, and if they cannot depend upon their elders to trust them, and not to inquire curiously into their small affairs, they will, unless singularly straightforward, be tempted to use deceptions which are very injurious to the character. But when young people have reached the age of seventeen or eighteen, even the force of circumstances points out that in this matter of letter-writing they must be left free. If they are worth anything, we may be quite sure they will not keep up any correspondence which they know their parents would disapprove; and if they

are not, the commands of parents will be of no more avail than their wishes.

With this subject of letters, that of conversation is intimately connected. Young people write to their friends, and of course they talk to them; and we must make up our minds that, in perfect innocence, they will occasionally say or wish to say things which they do not desire their parents, or persons set over them, to hear. This is a broad statement. It requires explanation. There is a great distinction—one which must never be overlooked—between words and acts which we should be ashamed for those whom we respect to know; and words and acts which we do not wish them to know.

If young people, when trusted together, say or do things which they would be ashamed to own, those things cannot be innocent. But there may be many little confidences and subjects of interest, even matters of mutual confession and advice, of real value, which would at once be put a stop to by the interference or cognizance of a third person. We all can understand this. Two persons not on terms of particular friendship are, we will suppose, talking freely to each other, and really enjoying the conversation; a third person enters, who is perhaps the intimate friend of one of them. The conversation ceases. There were no secrets going on. There may perhaps have been no reason why the new comer should not have heard what was said, and joined in it; but somehow it is impossible to continue. A new element has been introduced, a fresh combination must be formed. To be jealous and suspicious under such circumstances would be wrong and absurd; and yet

it is not unusual for elder persons to be fretted when they enter a room in which two young persons are talking, and find that the conversation suddenly stops. So, again, we can, in certain states of feeling, and under certain circumstances, say things to one person which we should be wholly unable to say to others. This is especially the case with the young. They can and do talk to those of their own age with an amount of freedom which it is almost impossible for them to enjoy with persons who stand above them. They do not love their young companions more, they do not respect them as much. They would on no account be guided by their advice in preference to that of their elders, but they are more free with them; and so they say things to them which they could not say to their mother or their governess.

And if we love them,—desire their confidence,—wish for their respect,—and look forward to their being one day our own cherished friends, they must be permitted to enjoy this freedom. Assist them in the choice of their friends we must, (this is a subject to be reserved for future consideration,) but when the friendship is formed with our sanction and concurrence, we must not act the spy upon it, still less suspect it.

It is with conversation as with letters, we cannot check it; therefore let us put upon it the restraint of honour. It is the only restraint which will be of any avail. And if we show this loving confidence, we shall very soon know all that we wish to know. When once girls feel that they are trusted, they will continually, of their own accord, come to the mother, or the friend whom they respect, and

repeat the very things which they have said to each other, and which they fancied were secrets reserved for their own breasts. They have a natural wish for guidance and help; and they will seek it if it is not forced upon them. Or it may be said—(the case has actually occurred)—“I have a secret, something which I should like to tell you, but I must not. I should be glad to ask your advice, but I am not at liberty to do so; but the secret makes me uncomfortable, and therefore I could not help telling you that I have it.” Such an instance is an exhibition of perfect confidence on both sides. The young girl knows that her secret will not be inquired into; the mother or the friend feels that it cannot be, on her part, a wrong secret. In due time it will certainly be known. Till then the young girl is learning a most valuable lesson, that of using her own judgment, and trying to act conscientiously under difficult circumstances, yet without any exercise of self-will. And similar confidence should be shown by ourselves. To say—“My dear, you must go away because I have something to talk about which I do not wish you to hear,” is an open avowal accepted without inquiry. To make a pretence for getting the child out of the room excites suspicion and wrong curiosity.

But we shall often meet with cases in which, although there is no actual deceit, yet from timidity, or vanity, or from some other cause, there is a want of openness, or an attempt at equivocation. Children—little children, especially—will say one thing, meaning another. They will ask favours for others, intending them all the time for their own benefit. This

species of deceit, is irritating from its meanness. It may be met with the calm statement, "What you really want is so and so. Now repeat your request again." A child is startled by this apparent knowledge of its thoughts, and ashamed of having been found out; and the next time it will be afraid to be thus double.

So, again, with regard to exaggeration. No one can over-estimate the grievous consequences of this fault, and, therefore, no pains should be spared to root it out. It is especially the sin of later years;—of persons who are otherwise amiable and agreeable; who are flattered by society, admired by their acquaintances, grieved over by their friends, and—too often—despised by their relations. For it is only those intimately connected with the offender who, as a general rule, really understand the fatal consequences of this form of falsehood. The careless exaggeration told in society passes by unheeded, or if remembered, it is difficult to fix the stigma upon the right person. Reports, it is known, are always exaggerated, and what is every one's sin is no one's sin. But amongst relations, the heart-burnings and discords, the misunderstandings and uncharitableness, caused by exaggeration, would be a history to fill volumes.

Surely the first germs of such a fault should be watched and uprooted! A child comes to us with some made-up story founded upon a fact which has actually happened. We laugh at its powers of imagination, perhaps we may think the story a proof of cleverness. Or if we consider it our duty to reprove, we do so with such ill-concealed amusement,

that the child instantly sees through our assumed anger, and is encouraged to be a little more imaginative on the next occasion which may offer.

There are even cases in which this imaginative faculty is so strong, that stories which have not the slightest foundation are invented and repeated with the most circumstantial details, and apparently without object; and when this is the case, the seeming innocence of evil on the part of the offender is a strong inducement to overlook the fault altogether. But to do this is to commit a fatal mistake. Fact is fact; fiction is fiction. To confound the two is falsehood. This is the lesson to be enforced for life. Quietly and deliberately, therefore, we may in such cases question and cross-question, till we have forced the conviction of untruthfulness upon the child's mind; and then the fault must be punished with more or less severity as a lie. The absence of motive or wrong intention must not be accepted as an excuse.

Exaggeration, which is a much more common form of this imaginative untruthfulness, requires to be treated in a somewhat similar way. A girl who habitually exaggerates is probably not aware of the extent of her offence, neither is she likely to be so for a long time. Some persons, especially great talkers, who pique themselves upon being agreeable in conversation, and therefore dress up their stories in order to be entertaining, go through life without perceiving the sin of exaggeration. But in educating the young, it is our duty to reprove most sharply those faults which are least likely to be noticed by conscience.

We must, therefore, rouse ourselves to some trouble in this matter. As in the case of direct invention, a little questioning and examination will make the child convict herself of her own fault. It will compel her to disentangle the fact from the fiction. She will not like the process, it will be humiliating, but very salutary; and when the fact comes out in its plain garb, she should be made to repeat it, to put it side by side with her own statement, and then be compelled to own that the discrepancy is a thing to be ashamed of. And the correction of the habit should be constant; no instance of it should be allowed to remain unchecked. It is one of those cases in which it is far less dangerous to err on the side of strictness than on that of leniency. Exaggeration is a weed which grows much more rapidly than we can pluck it up; and if it is once suffered to become a habit, it will mar all that is really valuable in the character. To catch up a person's words, to bring him to task, are expressions which have a very unpleasant sound; and grown-up people so greatly resent the attempt to carry them out in action, that in the world exaggerations are allowed to run their course, to multiply and enlarge, until the careless report becomes the accepted slander, and characters are ruined, and prospects blasted, without any intention of saying what is false, but because no one will take the trouble to be quite sure that he is speaking truth. But children will bear what their elders will not. Though the check may annoy them for the moment, they will not resent it afterwards, and the habit of watchful accuracy thus acquired will be an invaluable blessing to them through life. For with

this habit of strict truth, strict justice is inseparably connected. Perhaps there is no one who has not at some time or other in his life suffered from the injustice consequent upon misrepresentation, or who has not found himself tempted to be guilty of it. We make a certain statement, using certain words. The person to whom the statement is made repeats it with, perhaps, the change of one word for another, which he professes to think bears the same meaning. To us the two words have totally distinct meanings. We advisedly used the one, we would on no account have used the other. Upon this statement so altered an accusation is based and circulated, we defend ourselves by repeating the statement as we originally made it. But it is too late. The lie has gone forth into the world, and truth, be it never so swift-footed, will fail to overtake it.

And so with regard to ourselves, more especially in argument. That man must be very singularly true and just who has never been induced to take up his opponent's words, and twist them to suit his own meaning; and that knowingly, from the eager desire to prove himself in the right. Arguments would be conducted in a very different spirit, if every one would take the trouble to ascertain precisely what his adversary means before he attempts to refute him. Till this is done, the argument must be untruthful, because based upon false premisses, and the conclusions deduced from them must be unjust.

There are, indeed, times, when it seems as if the whole world was like Don Quixote, occupying itself in fighting with windmills, believing them to be giants; and in the act of fighting doing mischief which

can never be repaired. We may, perhaps, ourselves be dimly conscious of having some special little windmill, against which we have kept up a contest so long, and upon which we have wasted so much time and energy, that the information which should open our eyes to the fact that, after all, it was a windmill and no giant, would be by no means acceptable to us. But, however this may be, at least let us try to save our children from a mistake so reprehensible in its origin, and so sad in its consequences. Let us teach them the meaning and the power of words; show them the difference between what they say and what they wish to say; check them when they give way to exaggerated expressions themselves, or put a wrong construction upon those used by others; and, above all, let us never accept the excuse that the words they use do not in their mouths mean what they do in those of others. The ordinary, natural interpretation of words is their true interpretation. We have no more right to give them a meaning different from that of the world than we have to call sixpence a shilling, and endeavour to pass it as such. Words are the current coin of the common reason; and reason puts her own valuation upon them, and stamps them with her sovereign mark. The value may alter with time, custom, and circumstances, but the power which effects this alteration must still be the same; and the individual who chooses to assume the privilege to himself must be content to be scoffed at for his folly, and in the end severely punished for his presumption.

These are grave matters, worthy of all attention, small though they may to some appear. We wish

our children to be blessings in their generation, as well as a comfort to ourselves. It is the dream of every parent who thinks seriously upon the position in which man is placed in this world of probation, and faces without shrinking the tremendous interests involved in it.

Then, above all things, let us educate them in truth—for without truth there can be no justice, and without justice earth would become a Pandemonium.

CHAPTER XVI.

EDUCATION IN JUSTICE AS THE ANTIDOTE TO
SELFISHNESS.

AND thus we arrive at the duty of educating children in justice, or truth in act. Probably we have not often thought what this involves. The ordinary idea of justice is that of deciding fairly between two claimants. Such a task is seldom imposed upon children, and we may therefore naturally think that the duty of justice may be left to be enforced by reason when the age of discretion and responsibility shall have arrived.

But looking upon justice as being, what it is in fact, practical truth, we shall find that it enters into every question of morals, and is in reality the great instrument by which the errors consequent upon weakness and passion are, through God's help, to be rectified. Sin in any form is the result of falsehood. It is based upon a false belief concerning God; a false estimate of present happiness; and false expectations of it for the future. This same falsity, carried out in our actions, produces injustice towards our fellow-creatures, which is in reality nothing but an untrue estimate of the relations in which we stand to them, leading us to acts which are

the necessary and inevitable consequence of that belief. Thus, disregard of the true relation between parents and children exhibits itself in undutifulness; and a similar forgetfulness of true social relations produces pride. If we could suppose a child to be educated perfectly in the recognition of every family, social, and political relation,—so long as it carried out the principles of its education, it could never be proud or selfish, much less mean, or unkind, or ungrateful. But, alas! we have first to educate ourselves; and too many of us do not even know what self-education means; whilst the few who do comprehend it, have probably begun to learn their lesson so late in life, or have from circumstances found such difficulty in perfecting it, that even whilst they preach justice they act injustice, and example being more powerful than exhortation, their words fail to produce any lasting effect.

If, however, the principle of justice is so important, it cannot but be useful to examine into its practical working, as the corrective of two of the most stubborn ingrained faults of human nature—selfishness and pride;—faults into which so many others may be resolved, that in checking them we check a host of minor offences, which are commonly considered to require distinct treatment.

For in this, as in many other instances, inquiry brings us back to a very few original principles, which, if we can once thoroughly engraft in our minds, we shall solve many questions of moral and educational difficulty.

And first with regard to selfishness. What is selfishness? The answer will be suggested at once;

an undue regard for self. We may mark that word *undue*, or as it might be more strictly called *untrue* or *unjust*; for it points to the fact which selfish persons constantly bring forward as their excuse, that there is such a thing as due or lawful self-love, a quality which, as Bishop Butler says, "seems inseparable from all sensible creatures, who can reflect upon themselves, and their own interest or happiness, so as to have that interest an object to their minds."¹

Self-love comes to us by nature, and is in itself innocent; we have, therefore, no occasion to cultivate, only to regulate it. Even in those very rare instances in which there appears to be an exaggerated unselfishness, leading to folly and weakness, self-love is not extinct, though it takes a form in which it may be difficult to recognize it. That which is sinful is inordinate self-love, a love which does not rightly appreciate the claims of others; and we shall find, if we have to deal with a candid and true mind, that this perception of truth, acting as an incentive to practice, will be our most powerful assistant in counteracting selfishness.

For it is useless to appeal to feeling as an antidote to selfishness. There may be no real hardness of heart, or absence of benevolence in general, but in the particular case in which selfishness is exhibited, the claims of self-love are felt so strongly, that they overpower benevolence. Treat the question calmly, dispassionately, make a plain statement of the claims on both sides; then leave it to be considered, and

¹ Butler's Sermon "Upon the Love of our Neighbour."

even if the victory should be gained by selfishness, it will be accompanied by such a pang of self-reproach, suggested by truth and justice, that the power of the evil principle will at least be checked, and the consciousness of having been guilty of the fault will produce a most salutary sense of shame.

This mode of dealing with selfishness should be constantly put in practice. True claims should be always truly stated, and then left without any appeal to feeling.

And if in any case truth and justice are to be found on the side of the ordinarily selfish claimant, by all means let them be attended to. It is not because in nine cases we have ourselves been unfair, that in the tenth others may be unfair to us. We shall but irritate by compelling a child to a sacrifice which cannot rightly be required of it; and we shall weaken the power of the one great instrument, by which we hope to counteract the power of selfishness—perfect justice.

This cold justice is, indeed, very far removed from what is called unselfishness, which consists in yielding what may fairly be claimed; and not only so, but showing that the sacrifice is a pleasure. But in education we must be content to work with the materials which are given us. To feel pleasure in self-sacrifice is not in itself an exercise of virtue. It is only a gift or attainment which makes virtue easy. A person who does a kind act willingly, is more agreeable than one who does it unwillingly; but so long as both actions are the result of right principle, both are good. And if we can once succeed in establishing justice as a habit of mind, there

will be a pleasure in its exercise which will exhibit itself in a cheerful readiness of manner, producing in its turn gratitude on the part of the person who is benefited. Gratitude will soften the hardness of cold justice, and the result will be that glad forgetfulness of self, which is unselfishness in its best form.

And it is very important to bear in mind that selfishness is not corrected, as some persons are apt to think, by the example of what is commonly called unselfishness—often the contrary.

Unselfish mothers make selfish children. This is a startling assertion, but it will unquestionably be borne out by experience. What is the cause?

An unselfish mother—according to the world's definition—is one who gives up time, thought, comfort, pleasure, often even health, for what she considers her children's good, and yet more—for their gratification. She not only guides and instructs them, but she waits upon them, and works for them. So long as they are comfortable, it matters not that she is uncomfortable; so long as they are enjoying themselves, it is of no consequence if she is slaving for them.

But is this right? Is it the recognition of the true relation between the parent and child—between old and young? The same principle which requires a child to be respectful in manner, and obedient to her mother, requires also that she should be called upon to spare her trouble, to consider her wishes, to sacrifice little personal gratifications for her. But the so-called unselfish mother allows her daughter to forget this. She places herself in an untrue relation, and then supposes that she can work out ●

right result. If we desire to make children unselfish, we must show them their true duties, and then leave them to be performed.

And again: benevolent parents fall into a similar mistake. The true relation in which the man who possesses wealth, or even a competence, stands to the poor and needy, is that of God's steward. This is, in fact, the relation in which we all stand. We have no property, rightly so called. We are simply entrusted with a portion from the treasury of God, which we are to dispense according to certain laws. For our own share we are to take that which is *necessary* for the maintenance of the station of life in which God has placed us. To go beyond this is, in reality, to be guilty of injustice—to use for ourselves that which lawfully belongs to others.

But one of the first lessons which many really good parents give their children is that of practically denying this truth. Recognizing it themselves, they yet teach their children the contrary, by deliberately pursuing a system which must lead to this wrong result. They lavish upon them every luxury; they give them whatever they ask for; they never allow them to think that money is of any importance, still less do they associate its possession with duty and self-denial; and, more than all, they allow them to be benevolent by proxy. The poor, it may be, are fed; the naked clothed; the ignorant instructed; but it is, with no effort on the part of the children of the household. They are brought up on a system of delusion. If they see a case of distress, and their feelings are touched, they run to their parents and ask for money; and it is given them. And in the

act of relieving, the distress, the instinct of benevolence is satisfied, and a very comfortable self-complacency follows. But personal self-denial, personal self-sacrifice?—They know nothing of it. Their only idea of the extent of the claim to which they are liable is, that they must give what they do not want themselves; and as every passing fancy has from infancy been gratified, of course their personal needs are by no means small.

The effects of such training are painfully visible in after life. The subject is a very large and a very important one, and is forced upon our attention year by year, as public statistics and private observation bring before us the frightful rapidity with which poverty and suffering, with their attendant vice, are increasing, so as to make it seemingly hopeless in any degree to overtake them.

England boasts of her benevolence; her charities are reckoned by thousands. Alas! her poor, and degraded, and ignorant are reckoned by millions!

And these thousands—from whom are they collected? Where are the princely gifts of those on whom God has bestowed the wealth of princes? Never may we forget the few who have, in our own days, come forward to show how riches may be used, so that they may become a treasure in Heaven! But setting aside these noble exceptions, is it not an acknowledged fact, that, with regard to both public and private charities, by far the larger portion of the funds is contributed by those who have only moderate or even small incomes? Are not the clergy—many of them possessing incomes which a nobleman would scarcely consider sufficient for his upper servant—

compelled to support by their yearly mites schemes for good, which one effort of real self-denial, on the part of a millionaire, might establish permanently at once?

Yes, England is benevolent, as the world reckons benevolence! The columns of the *Times* carry the record of our good deeds to the farthest end of the earth, and nations wonder and applaud. But the columns of the *Times* are not the record which is to be produced at the Great Day of account; and when God shall demand of each individual, now revelling in luxury, the principle on which his charities were regulated, there is but one answer which will be accepted. It is embodied in the words of David to Araunah—"Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."¹

And these rich men—these millionaires—these possessors of splendid fortunes, or even only of very ample means—are, then, utterly selfish, totally insensible to the needs of their fellow-creatures!

By no means. They are, for the most part, kind-hearted, estimable, irreproachable in their family relations. They are merely, like Dives, ignorant of the nature and extent of their social relations.. They see untruly—that is all. They are quite willing that Lazarus should lie at their gate, and eat of their crumbs; some, perhaps, will even take the trouble to send him out a portion from their well-spread table. What they do not see is, that the sufferer has a claim to more—that he is to be tended, and watched, and

¹ 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

nourished; that personal self-denial, for his benefit, is required of them; that wealth is an excrescence which hardens around the heart, and that it must be cut away before that heart can be really touched.

To give, and give, and give, until the self-denial of giving is *felt*—that is the test of whether we have given enough.

And so to be a weak fool—or an enthusiast! Nay, far from it. Once more recur to the law of true relation, the principle of justice, and this vexed question of giving will be made clearer. The relations in which we stand to our fellow-creatures are many. That of wealth to poverty is but one. Royalty, rank, political office, have their claims as well as beggary and ignorance. The encouragement of art, literature, science; the support of national honour, the duties of hospitable and social intercourse, are no more to be neglected than the foundation and support of hospitals and reformatories. The station in which God has placed us by birth it is incumbent upon us to maintain. The fact that God has annexed pleasure and ease to it does not make it wrong in us to keep it up. So long as we guard against any self-deceit in this matter, we are at liberty to enjoy thankfully the comforts which He has bestowed upon us; only,—the greater are the necessities of luxury which surround us, the greater should be the unostentatious self-denial which we practise. Doubtless many difficult questions will from time to time suggest themselves as to the extent of the claims of birth and station, but an honest heart will seek God's aid, and so be enabled to answer them upon the whole

rightly ; more especially if education upon this point has begun early.

Persons accustomed from childhood to recognize claims of every kind will never, indeed, succeed in reconciling them perfectly, for to do this is to exercise absolute justice ; but the habit of considering them will give a largeness and clearness of comprehension, which will be a safer guide through life than the most disinterested intentions, taken apart from experience and judgment.

This is more especially seen with regard to personal expenditure. The sooner a young person can be trusted with an allowance the better. Such responsibility will teach real self-denial and economy, and prove the test of true generosity. Nothing is so easy as to give away that which belongs to another ; and a child brought up in this habit becomes both selfish and extravagant unconsciously. In all cases, the allowance should be measured by the child's future prospects. It is as great a mistake to give a small allowance to a rich heiress, as it is to give a large sum to a child who may have to work for her own livelihood. What is needed in both instances is the knowledge of the true relation between the individual and her fellow-creatures ; and it is as important for the rich to be taught to spend money generously, as it is for the poor to spend it carefully.

For it must be remembered, that people give at thirty according to the rate at which they were taught to give at ten or twelve. If the gifts of the latter age were necessarily limited to a twentieth part of the small allowance, then the gifts of the

former will usually be in the same proportion to the whole fortune. • Treble the allowance, and the charities and kindnesses may be trebled, for the personal expenses will remain the same; and the habit of distributing these charities wisely will be a lesson to be practised through life.

• And, after all, this duty of giving is mainly habit, except in persons of great benevolence. It is astonishing how quickly we accustom ourselves to enlarge our charities or our kindnesses when once our eyes are opened to perceive the duty. Wealthy persons, who give five pounds a year to a charity, might often just as easily give twenty, thirty, or even fifty, if they did but think about it. But this they have never been accustomed to do. Having never felt any need themselves, they have no idea what need is. And in the same way, and much more frequently, they have no perception of the claims of those who are not, strictly speaking, poor, but who are hampered by small incomes, or large families. They cannot understand that what is so practicable to themselves is quite out of the power of their friends. Like the princess who in the time of great scarcity wondered that the poor did not eat cake, if they were unable to procure bread, they cannot see where the real pressure lies; and so it never enters into their minds to relieve it, as they often and often might do, by some thoughtful kindness, which, without bringing with it an unpleasant sense of obligation, would really give the aid required. Now all this is a question of early habits, of a perception of true claims—in other words, of justice. That is a hard, cold word; it has no such pleasant sound as bene-

volence, or generosity; but it is the foundation of both, and without it benevolence is weakness, and generosity but another form of selfishness; since it is the recognition of the claim, which we like, in preference to that to which we are indifferent.

Be just before you are generous. Pay your debts before you make presents. What a host of sorrows and disappointments would be spared if these common maxims could only be thoroughly implanted in young minds! And they never can be, unless there is a sense of possession, and with it of responsibility and limitation. So long as a young girl can go to a father or mother for everything she needs, she will have no knowledge of what debt means, no motive for self-denial, no pleasure in giving—and, in consequence, no thought for others. Possessing nothing which she can strictly call her own, she is not called upon to recognize social and charitable claims, and so unconsciously she becomes selfish.

And this strict justice is a most valuable safeguard against self-deceit. There is scarcely anything about which people delude themselves and others so much as generosity. It is such a very dazzling, conspicuous virtue—so extremely pleasant in its exercise, and it produces such immediate results! It comes forth, as it were, full blown; whereas justice is buried in the ground, and when it does exhibit itself, does so often under a guise which is far from pleasing. Probably, it appears to be want of sympathy, and niggardliness. It is only as time goes on, and we see the full working of the two principles, that we perceive the true nature of justice, and are compelled to own that without it real generosity cannot exist.

When a man who owes another five hundred pounds, offers his creditor a present of fifty, and expects to be thanked for his generosity, the world cries scorn upon his folly ; but the same absurdity is carried out continually, on a small scale, in private relations, and the beginning of it may in almost all instances be traced to some wrong training in youth.

Justice may be accepted in lieu of generosity, but generosity can never be received in lieu of justice. And for this reason, that it is not generosity at all. A generous person does what is just, and something beyond. A person who overlooks justice—takes away from A. in order to give to B.—and then entertains the delusion that he has made a sacrifice of something which was his own—this is simple falsity ; an untruth.

CHAPTER XVII.

EDUCATION IN JUSTICE AS THE ANTIDOTE TO PREJUDICE
AND ILLIBERALITY.

BUT truth working itself out in justice is not only the counteracting principle to selfishness, but to narrowness of mind, uncharitableness, want of sympathy. The assertion is almost self-evident, and yet we are apt to make mistakes upon the subject. What many of us are tempted to do is to choose the duties which we like, and neglect those which we dislike. Or, even if it is no question of preference, to choose one or two which we think important, and to put others aside: so we become narrow and unsympathetic.

Now, this certainly is not in accordance with the example given us by our Blessed Lord, or with the teaching of His Apostles. Our Lord taught publicly, but He also taught privately. He spent whole nights in prayer, but in the daytime He mingled with crowds in cities. He lived apart with His disciples, but He was present at the marriage feast, and dined at the table of the Pharisee. And, in like manner, in the directions given by the Apostles to their converts, we find a careful inculcation of the duties following upon all the relations in which man-

kind stand to each other. Sovereign and rulers, friends, children, inferiors, the rich, the poor, all are mentioned; all have true claims, and, therefore, all must, in their degree, be noticed.

It is this kind of education which alone can make young people large-minded. We sometimes find persons giving up all social intercourse because they desire to devote themselves more entirely to the good of their families:—a most excellent object, and if the world was peopled with the members of their own household, a most laudable resolution. But as it happens that there are other persons to be considered, and other claims to be attended to, it will generally be found that the effect of such conduct is to create a spirit of narrow-mindedness, unable to understand or sympathize with anything beyond its own little sphere of thought and action. So, again, people give themselves up to one kind of occupation, perhaps to some benevolent work; they devote all their thoughts to it, but they make great blunders, and the work proves a failure. Why? They have taken a one-sided view. They have shut themselves out from the opinions and sympathies of the ordinary world, and, in consequence, are deficient in sound judgment.

This may seem to contradict what has been previously said as to being guided in education by the peculiar talents and idiosyncrasies of the individual. But it does not really do so. No doubt, it is right that persons, whether young or old, should, if possible, devote themselves to the work for which they seem specially fitted, but it is also needful that some attention should, at the same time, be paid to other

duties in order to keep up a right balance, both of the mental and moral powers.

We occasionally hear of some very small rent paid for a piece of ground, merely as a recognition of true ownership. So should it be with the duties arising from mutual relations. God claims them all from us in greater or less degree. If circumstances compel us to give the larger portion of our time to one claim, then what remains must be divided amongst those which are less imperative. But some notice must be taken of each. The shilling must be paid, though it may be impossible for us to offer the pound. The rule can less easily be carried out with children than by grown-up persons, because the sphere of employment of the young must, to a certain extent, be limited; but even with them it should never be forgotten. Study must not preclude some thought for the poor. Lessons must not be so engrossing as utterly to prevent an attention to active home duties and social relations. But in all these things it is the *tone* of a house which educates, and one-sided or narrow-minded parents will make one-sided or narrow-minded children, let tutors or governesses do what they may to counteract the evil. A high standard, a large view, a recognition of all claims, even though it may be impossible to give them more than a slight attention,—this it is which keeps the heart sympathetic and the hand open, and more especially makes the judgment sound. A right view of the relations of life,—and truth, and sound judgment, are inseparable.

And, once more, truth and justice are the only support of true—the only safeguard against false—

liberality. This principle, taken in the abstract, is the idol of the present day, and its prevalent worship leads many to suppose that it is inconsistent with the maintenance of truth. Undoubtedly, in a number of cases, it is so. Liberality that admits everything to be true, which every one thinks true, does, in fact, deny the existence of truth altogether. But the world would not be so eager in its support of liberality if there were no admixture of good in it. Foolish and wicked as mankind are, they are not idiots or demons; they do not admire folly for folly's sake, nor sin for sin's sake. They may make grievous mistakes as to what is good, but it is because they believe that what they uphold really is good that they value it.

And true liberality is good, because it is based upon truth and justice. Without negating truth, it recognizes the fact that it may be viewed differently by different persons. We look at a landscape through an ordinary glass, and declare that the grass is green. Another person, without being aware of what he is doing, looks at it through a red glass, and says that it is red. We are bound to uphold the truth, that the hue of the grass is what we know it to be. It would be an absurd liberality to profess to doubt the fact, because of the opposite assertion; but so it would be an injustice not to own that our opponent has a reason for his statement. As he looks at the grass it is not green. His fault is not in stating what he sees, but in maintaining the statement without referring to the testimony of other witnesses, and of his own experience, which would convince him that he is under a delusion.

Truth and justice imperatively demand that, in all contested cases, we should place ourselves in the position of the person opposed to us, and, before we begin to argue—much more to find fault—do our very utmost to see with his eyes, and view the subject according to his prejudices. This, we must remember, is not for a moment admitting that the truth which we are regarding has no independent existence apart from our idea of it (which is the false liberality so justly dreaded); it is only putting on another pair of spectacles through which to look at it.

Children may be taught to do this just as much as their elders. But they will not readily acquire the lesson. Perhaps, in the ordering of God's wisdom, it may be better that it should be rather a difficulty; otherwise, with the tendency to exaggeration and misconception common to their age, they would be very likely to imbibe the idea that truth is nothing in itself, and that it does not signify whether what we believe is true, so long as we think it to be true. An error of this kind may, as we learn from the analogy of nature, produce grave consequences. The man who grasps a knife believing it to be a stick, does not escape injury because his imagination deceived him; and false doctrine will lead to wrong practice, and, in consequence, to sorrow and suffering. But though it may be, and indeed is, most necessary to insist upon this objective existence of truth, especially in early years, yet we shall find that, as young people grow up, it is equally necessary to accustom them to consider it subjectively, or according to the view taken of it by different minds. And still more is this habit of viewing a question on all sides,

and understanding all the facts connected with it, needful in the affairs of common life.

Hasty judgments, unkind imputations, angry words—all have their source in prejudice; pre-judgment—or judgment formed before the facts of a case are known, and the view taken of it by others, is thoroughly considered. We are quite safe in enforcing the exercise of such considerations—or, in other words, of justice,—in all childish or youthful quarrels or discussions, because we can never make young people too forbearing, or too patient and just, and unprejudiced, where their own personal interests, or their likings and dislikings, are concerned. If we can teach them to pause before they pronounce a judgment until they have heard what is to be said on the other side, we shall give them an invaluable lesson for life. There will be no fear, in such cases, of their denying the existence of right, because they are compelled to see that there is right, or—more probably—wrong, on both sides. Moral truth is in this unlike revealed truth, that it has a witness in our own breasts which cannot be gainsaid. Two persons may dispute upon the doctrines of the Trinity or the Incarnation, and false liberality, judging between them, may say that each holds truth because each believes himself to do so. But suppose it to be a question of whether it was right, under certain circumstances, to kill a man, the bystander called upon to decide would not for a moment doubt that the act of murder was wrong, though he might be doubtful whether, in the special instance under consideration, the act could be called murder.

And if we can bring ourselves to recognize the duty

of true liberality, its extent and its limitations; we shall have gained a valuable antidote to anxiety in our education of the young. Persons who form theories, and act upon systems with their children, are often greatly disturbed by finding them suddenly upset by the events of life. Wishing to be wiser than Providence, they mark out for themselves a plan of life, which is (little though they think it) to be independent of Providence. They settle themselves, perhaps, in a certain locality, because they wish their children to be brought up in Church principles, and believe that the religious teaching will be sound, and the society congenial. And so for a time it is, and the children never hear of erroneous doctrine, except as of something monstrous from which they must be guarded, and are never allowed to associate with any persons, but those who agree with them. But unexpectedly the clergyman dies, the society changes, and the parents are in despair. All their plans are set at nought; they must either move to some other place, which, perhaps, is out of their power, or they must expose their children to instruction and social intercourse which may unsettle their minds. What is to be done?

Surely, to own that God's teaching is wiser than man's, and to submit to it. Let the children go to church, and hear what is said, and then show them at home why, and how, it is unsound. They will learn in this way to distinguish truth in itself, from truth as it is represented under distorted forms, and their convictions will be far firmer than if they had never known the existence of error. And so also let them mix in the society which has gathered around

them, hear differences of opinion, see differences of manner, feel by experience the power and earnestness of minds nurtured in an atmosphere quite unlike their own. Some cherished prejudices may be shaken, some narrow views enlarged, and possibly—for there is no doubt a risk of such an evil—opinions which have been held sacred may become in their eyes less important than they really are. But if such teaching and intercourse are sent in the ordering of God's Providence, without effort or fault of our own (in which case, it would be unquestionably wrong), we may not fear it. In the end it will work for good, much greater good than any system of ours, though the latter may be carefully considered and effectually carried out. "L'homme propose, mais Dieu dispose." And how shall man's plans be wiser than God's orderings?

There are dangers to which we may not dare to expose children voluntarily, but which, if placed in their path by God, must be intended for their good.

To hold certain principles because some particular person holds them, and we have always been taught to believe that what he says is right, may serve us very well so long as we are under the influence of this individual, and so long also as he himself keeps in the right track. But experience teaches us that no human being, good and clever though he may be, is safe from fatal error; and our Blessed Lord especially warns us to call "no one our Master upon earth; because One is our Master which is in heaven."

That conviction of truth alone is to be prized which
can stand, though angels tempt it to its fall.

"So spake the seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless—faithful only he
Among innumerable false; unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept—his love—his zeal :
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single."

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